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AN

ENQUIRY

INTO THE

DUTIES OF THE FEMALE SEX.

By THOMAS GISBORNE, M. A.

THE FOURTH EDITION, CORRECTED.

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PREFACE.

THE following Work owes its origin to the favourable reception which the Public has been pleaſed to give to the "Enquiry into the "Duties of Men;" and to wiſhes intimated from different quarters very deſerving of attention.

That I might have a reaſonable chance of laying before the Reader a performance not deſtitute of all claim to originality; I purpoſely abſtained, until the principal part was executed, from the peruſal of

other Treatiſes addreſſed to perſons of the Female Sex, or primarily deſigned for their inſtruction. I then thought it incumbent upon me to examine various works of that nature. The reſult proved as was to be expected. I found many opinions coinciding with my own, many differing totally from them. The latter circumſtance led to alterations wherever reflection convinced me that I had been in a greater or a leſs degree under the influence of error; and to additions when they appeared neceſſary for the ſupport of my own ſentiments, and the matter in queſtion ſeemed important enough to require them. On ſuch occaſions, however, my object has been to furniſh uſeful rules and juſt

juſt concluſions with a brief explanation of the grounds of them; rather than to point out and cenſure the individuals, who, in my apprehenſion, have recommended what ought to be ſhunned, or have reſted judicious maxims of conduct wholly or in part on improper motives. In one or two inſtances I have been obliged, for the ſake of perſpicuity, to ſtate with plainneſs the objectionable poſition. But I have been ſolicitous not to load a practical work with controverſy.

YOXALL LODGE,
Oct. 18, 1796.

New Editions of the following Works, by THOMAS GISBORNE, M. A. *(Author of the Enquiry into the Duties of the Female Sex,) have been lately publiſhed by* T. CADELL *jun. and* W. DAVIES, STRAND.

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AN

ENQUIRY

INTO THE

DUTIES OF THE FEMALE SEX.

CHAP. I.

PLAN OF THE WORK EXPLAINED.

In the outſet of the preſent undertaking it may be proper briefly to ſtate the plan on which it is conducted.

The duties of the female ſex, in general, are the objects which it is propoſed to inveſtigate. The obſervations contained in the following pages will, in many caſes, have an eſpecial reference to the conduct of women placed in the higher or in the middle claſſes of ſociety; but they will

ſeldom be directed excluſively to any rank or ſtation. It is my wiſh, and it will be my endeavour, that this treatiſe, as far as it is capable of being uſeful, may be uſeful to readers of every deſcription.

The ſphere of domeſtic life, the ſphere in which female exertion is chiefly occupied, and female excellence is beſt diſplayed, admits far leſs diverſity of action, and conſequently of temptation, than is to be found in the widely differing profeſſions and employments into which private advantage and public good require that men ſhould be diſtributed. The barriſter and the phyſician have their reſpective duties, and their reſpective trials. The fundamental principles by which both the one and the other is to regulate his conduct are the ſame. The occaſion, however, on which thoſe principles are to operate, and the enticement, whether of pleaſure or of intereſt, by which their preſent effect is impeded, and their future ſtability endangered, are continually preſenting themſelves

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ſelves to each in a ſhape correſponding to the purſuits in which he is buſied, and the objects moſt familiar to his attention and deſire. But the wife and the daughter of the former are ſcarcely diſtinguiſhed as ſuch, by any peculiarities of moral obligation, from the perſons ſtanding in the ſame degree of relationſhip to the latter. The diſcriminating lines, unleſs their number or their ſtrength be increaſed by circumſtances not neceſſarily reſulting from the profeſſion of the huſband or the father, are few, obſcure, and inconſtant. The ſame general truth might be exemplified in a variety of additional inſtances. Even the ſuperiority of rank which elevates the peereſs above her untitled neighbour, though it unqueſtionably creates a difference between their reſpective duties, is far from creating a difference equal to that which ſubſiſts between the duties of an hereditary legiſlator and thoſe of a private gentleman. Such being the general ſimilarity in the ſituation of women, differing in ſome reſpects from each other in outward circumſtances, or

even placed in ſeparate claſſes of ſociety; I purpoſe to couch in general terms the remarks about to be offered on the conduct of the female ſex. But I ſhall at the ſame time be ſtudiouſly ſolicitous to point out, whenever a fit occaſion ſhall intervene, the moſt prominent of thoſe inſtances in which the moral activity and the moral vigilance of the female mind are to be guided into particular channels, in conſequence of ſome particularity, either in the ſtation of the individual, or in the rank or profeſſion of her neareſt connections. The peculiar temptations of the capital, and thoſe of the country, will alſo receive the diſtinct conſideration which they deſerve.

Marriage draws a broad line of diſcrimination, ſeparating the female ſex into two claſſes, each of which has moral duties and trials peculiar to itſelf. A writer, therefore, whoſe inquiries, in whatever manner they may be carried on, ſhall relate to the whole circle of feminine duties, will almoſt inevitably find himſelf conſtrained to conſider the

the duties of married women in ſome meaſure apart from thoſe of the ſingle. Yet he will not fail to perceive, on the ſlighteſt attention to his ſubject, that there are numerous rules of moral obligation which attach equally on women of either claſs; rules which reſpect fundamental principles of action, diſpoſitions of the heart, the cultivation of the underſtanding, the employment of time, and various other particulars eſſential or ſubſervient to excellence and uſefulneſs of character. How then is he to avoid tedious and unprofitable repetition in the reflections which he makes, and the advice which he offers? By determining, previouſly to the commencement of his work, the plan of compoſition and arrangement moſt favourable, in his judgement, to perſpicuity and impreſſiveneſs; and then, by inſerting ſuch obſervations as are applicable both to ſingle and matrimonial life in that part of his performance in which, whether it relates chiefly to the married or to the unmarried, they ſeverally will beſt accord with the general ſcheme already ſettled.

I have to requeſt my readers of all deſcriptions uniformly to bear in mind, that ſuch is the principle on which I conceive it adviſable to proceed.

As my deſign in the preſent work is to promote, as far as may be in my power, the welfare of the female ſex, an error or temptation becomes entitled to notice, when it is one to which women are expoſed, though they ſhould not be expoſed to it in a greater degree than the other ſex. In animadverting on ſubjects of this deſcription, I may not always be found to have obſerved, when the obſervation would have been well-founded, that the animadverſion might be extended to men. Sometimes too, in ſpeaking of failings which prevail in the female world, I may neglect expreſsly to ſtate, when I might ſtate with truth, that there is a large number of individuals who are exempt from them. Let not the former omiſſion be aſcribed to partiality, nor the latter to the injuſtice of indiſcriminate cenſure. I ſhall be gene-

rally

rally ſolicitous to expreſs myſelf ſo as to preclude the poſſibility of ſuch ſuſpicions. But it may be better even to incur a ſmall riſk of occaſional miſconſtruction, than to weary the reader with the perpetual recurrence of qualifying and explanatory phraſes.

Some of the obſervations advanced in the ſubſequent chapters will not, I truſt, appear to the generality of thoſe who may peruſe them, the leſs deſerving of regard, in conſequence of being deduced from ſcriptural authority. To ſuch perſons as, rejecting that authority, have imbibed opinions concerning female duties, and the ſtandard of female excellence, at variance with thoſe which Chriſtianity inculcates, let me be permitted to recommend, antecedently to every ſtudy and to every purſuit, a deliberate and candid examination of the evidence of a religion, which promotes human happineſs by the holineſs and wiſdom of the principles and rules of conduct which it furniſhes for this life, as well as by affording, to the

ſincere Chriſtian, grounds of hope and conſolation in looking forward to another. And ſuch of my readers as confeſs the divine origin of the Goſpel, and in conſequence acknowledge the duty of regulating their actions by Chriſtian rules, I would remind of two circumſtances, which appear to be among the cauſes that moſt powerfully impede the influence of religion in this country. Firſt; that numbers, who regard themſelves as acting conformably to the dictates of Chriſtianity, are by no means in the habit of examining with ſufficient care, whether the rules by which they act are truly Chriſtian rules, that is to ſay, expreſsly contained in the Goſpel, or fairly deducible from it. And ſecondly; that they ſcarcely conſider at all, that a conformity even to right rules cannot be expected to be available in the ſight of God, except it proceeds, in proportion to our knowledge, from Chriſtian views and diſpoſitions; from a profound reverence and grateful love for our Supreme Benefactor, and an earneſt deſire to obey and pleaſe him in every action of our lives.

CHAP. II.

GENERAL GROUNDS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THE FEMALE CHARACTER BRIEFLY STATED.

In the courſe of a work which purpoſes to inveſtigate ſomewhat at length the ſeveral duties of the female ſex, the importance of the female character will naturally diſcloſe itſelf. It is not by ſtudied panegyric, but by delineating in detail the various and momentous duties, to the diſcharge of which, women are called both by reaſon and revelation, that the influence of feminine virtues will be rendered moſt conſpicuous. It is thus too that the reſponſibility attached to that influence in all its branches, in all its minuteſt capacities of being beneficially employed, will be placed in the ſtrongeſt light; a circumſtance of no ſmall efficacy as to precluding the

the emotions of arrogance and the confidence of ſelf-ſufficiency, which are ever likely to be produced by ſimple eulogium. The general contempt, therefore, which is ſometimes manifeſted reſpecting women by perſons of the other ſex, and moſt frequently by perſons who are the leaſt capable of forming a judgement concerning thoſe whom they profeſs to deſpiſe, would not have induced me to make any preliminary obſervations on the ſubject. There is, however, a prejudice which it is deſirable to remove without delay, becauſe it is found to exiſt in female minds, and unavoidably contributes, in proportion to its ſtrength, to extinguiſh the deſire of improvement, and to repreſs uſeful exertion. The fact is this. Young women endowed with good underſtandings, but deſirous of juſtifying the mental indolence which they have permitted themſelves to indulge; or diſappointed at not perceiving a way open by which they, like their brothers, may diſtinguiſh themſelves and riſe to eminence; are occaſionally heard to declare their opinion,

nion, that the ſphere in which women are deſtined to move is ſo humble and ſo limited, as neither to require nor to reward aſſiduity; and under this impreſſion, either do not diſcern, or will not be perſuaded to conſider, the real and deeply intereſting effects, which the conduct of their ſex will always have on the happineſs of ſociety. In attempting to obviate this error, I ſhould be very culpable were I to flatter the ambitious fondneſs for diſtinction, which may, in part at leaſt, have given riſe to it. To ſuggeſt motives to unaſſuming and virtuous activity, is the purpoſe of the following brief remarks.

Human happineſs is on the whole much leſs affected by great but unfrequent events, whether of proſperity or of adverſity, of benefit or of injury, than by ſmall but perpetually recurring incidents of good or evil. Of the latter deſcription are the effects which the influence of the female character produces. It is not like the periodical inundation of a river, which over-

overſpreads once in a year a deſert with tranſient plenty. It is like the dew of heaven which deſcends at all ſeaſons, returns after ſhort intervals, and permanently nouriſhes every herb of the field.

In three particulars, each of which is of extreme and never-ceaſing concern to the welfare of mankind, the effect of the female character is moſt important.

Firſt, In contributing daily and hourly to the comfort of huſbands, of parents, of brothers and ſiſters, and of other relations, connections, and friends, in the intercourſe of domeſtic life, under every viciſſitude of ſickneſs and health, of joy and affliction.

Secondly, In forming and improving the general manners, diſpoſitions, and conduct of the other ſex, by ſociety and example.

Thirdly, In modelling the human mind during the early ſtages of its growth, and fixing,

fixing, while it is yet ductile, its growing principles of action; children of each sex being, in general, under maternal tuition during their childhood, and girls until they become women.

Are these objects insufficient to excite virtuous exertion? Let it then be remembered, that there is another of supreme importance set before each individual; and one which she cannot accomplish without faithfully attending, according to her situation and ability, to those already enumerated; namely, the attainment of everlasting felicity, by her conduct during her present probationary state of existence.

CHAP. III.

ON THE PECULIAR FEATURES BY WHICH THE CHARACTER OF THE FEMALE MIND IS NATURALLY DISCRIMINATED FROM THAT OF THE OTHER SEX.

THE commander, who ſhould be employed to aſcertain, for the ſecurity of the inhabitants of a particular country, the moſt efficacious means of guarding the frontier againſt invaders, and of obſtructing their progreſs if they ſhould ever force their way into the interior, would fix his attention, in the firſt inſtance, on the general aſpect of the region which he is called upon to defend. He would ſtudy the mountains, the defiles, the rivers, the foreſts. He would inform himſelf what quarters are open to inroads; what are the circumſtances which favour the machinations, what the undiſguiſed violence, of the enemy; what are the

the poſts which the aſſailants would find it moſt advantageous to occupy; what the ſtations from which, if once in their poſſeſſion, it would be moſt difficult to diſlodge them. The plan of defence which he would preſcribe, while, on the one hand, it would be formed on thoſe fundamental principles, which military experience has eſtabliſhed as the baſis of all warlike operations, would be adapted, on the other, with unremitting attention to all the diſcriminating features which characteriſe the particular diſtrict, in which thoſe general principles are to be reduced to practice.

A writer, in like manner, who ventures to hope, that in ſuggeſting obſervations on the duties incumbent on the female ſex, he may be found to have drawn his concluſions from the ſources of nature and of truth, ſhould endeavour, in the firſt place, to aſcertain the characteriſtical impreſſions which the Creator has ſtamped on the female mind; the leading features, if ſuch there be, by which he has diſcriminated the talents and

diſpoſitions

diſpoſitions of women from thoſe of men. For it is from theſe original indications of the intention of Providence, taken in conjunction with the additional and ſtill clearer proofs of the Divine will which the Scriptures ſhall be found to have diſcloſed, that the courſe and extent of female duties, and the true value of the female character, are to be collected.

In different countries, and at different periods, female excellence has been eſtimated by very different ſtandards. At almoſt every period it has been rated among nations, deeply immerſed in barbariſm, by the ſcale of ſervile fear and capacity for toil. Examine the domeſtic proceedings of ſavage tribes in the old world and in the new, and aſk who is the beſt daughter and the beſt wife. The anſwer is uniform. She who bears with ſuperior perſeverance the viciſſitudes of ſeaſons, the fervour of the ſun, the dews of night: She who, after a march through woods and ſwamps from morn to eve, is the firſt to bring on her

ſhoulders a burthen of fuel, and foremoſt in erecting the family wigwam, while the men ſtand around in liſtleſs unconcern: She who ſearches with the greateſt activity for roots in the foreſt; prowls with moſt ſucceſs along the ſhore for limpets; and dives with unequalled fortitude for ſea-eggs in the creek: She who ſtands dripping and famiſhed before her huſband, while he devours, ſtretched at eaſe, the produce of her exertions; waits his tardy permiſſion without a word or a look of impatience; and feeds, with the humbleſt gratitude, and the ſhorteſt intermiſſion of labour, on the ſcraps and offals which he diſdains: She, in a word, who is moſt tolerant of hard-ſhip and of unkindneſs. When nations begin to emerge from groſs barbariſm, every new ſtep which they take towards refine-ment is commonly marked by a gentler treatment, and a more reaſonable eſtima-tion of women. And every improvement in their opinions and conduct reſpecting the female ſex prepares the way for addi-tional progreſs in civiliſation. It is not,

however, in the rudeneſs of unciviliſed life, that female worth can either be fitly apprehended, or be diſplayed in its genuine colours. And we ſhall be the leſs inclined to wonder at the perverſion of ideas which has been exemplified on this ſubject, amidſt ignorance and neceſſity, among Hottentots and Indians; when we conſider the erroneous opinions on the ſame topic which have obtained more or leſs currency in our own country, and even in modern times. It would perhaps be no unfair repreſentation of the ſentiment which prevailed in the laſt age, to affirm that ſhe who was completely verſed in the ſciences of pickling and preſerving, and in the myſteries of croſs-ſtitch and embroidery; ſhe who was thoroughly miſtreſs of the family receipt-book and of her needle, was deemed, in point of ſolid attainments, to have reached the meaſure of female perfection. Since that period, however, it has been univerſally acknowledged, that the intellectual powers of women are not reſtricted to the arts of the houſekeeper and the ſempſtreſs. Genius, taſte, and learning itſelf,

ſelf, have appeared in the number of female endowments and acquiſitions. And we have heard, from time to time, ſome bold aſſertors of the rights of the weaker ſex ſtigmatiſing, in terms of indignant complaint, the monopoliſing injuſtice of the other; laying claim, on behalf of their clients, to co-ordinate authority in every department of ſcience and of erudition; and upholding the perfect equality of injured woman and uſurping man in language ſo little guarded, as ſcarcely to permit the latter to conſider the labours of the camp and of the ſenate as excluſively pertaining to himſelf.

The Power who called the human race into being has, with infinite wiſdom, regarded, in the ſtructure of the corporeal frame, the taſks which the different ſexes were reſpectively deſtined to fulfil. To man, on whom the culture of the ſoil, the erection of dwellings, and, in general, thoſe operations of induſtry, and thoſe meaſures of defence, which include difficult and dangerous exertion, were ultimately to devolve, He

has imparted the ſtrength of limb, and the robuſtneſs of conſtitution, requiſite for the perſevering endurance of toil. The female form, not commonly doomed, in countries where the progreſs of civiliſation is far advanced, to labours more ſevere than the offices of domeſtic life, He has caſt in a ſmaller mould, and bound together by a looſer texture. But, to protect weakneſs from the oppreſſion of domineering ſuperiority, thoſe whom He has not qualified to contend, He has enabled to faſcinate; and has amply compenſated the defect of muſcular vigour by ſymmetry and expreſſion, by elegance and grace. To me it appears, that He has adopted, and that He has adopted with the moſt conſpicuous wiſdom, a correſponding plan of diſcrimination between the mental powers and diſpoſitions of the two ſexes. The ſcience of legiſlation, of juriſprudence, of political economy; the conduct of government in all its executive functions; the abſtruſe reſearches of erudition; the inexhauſtible depths of philoſophy; the acquirements

ſubordinate

ſubordinate to navigation; the knowledge indiſpenſable in the wide field of commercial enterpriſe; the arts of defence, and of attack, by land and by ſea, which the violence or the fraud of unprincipled aſſailants render needful; theſe, and other ſtudies, purſuits, and occupations, aſſigned chiefly or entirely to men, demand the efforts of a mind endued with the powers of cloſe and comprehenſive reaſoning, and of intenſe and continued application, in a degree in which they are not requiſite for the diſcharge of the cuſtomary offices of female duty. It would therefore ſeem natural to expect, and experience, I think, confirms the juſtice of the expectation, that the Giver of all good, after beſtowing thoſe powers on men with a liberality proportioned to the ſubſiſting neceſſity, would impart them to the female mind with a more ſparing hand. It was equally natural to expect, that in the diſpenſation of other qualities and talents, uſeful and important to both ſexes, but particularly ſuited to the ſphere in which women were intended to move,

He would confer the larger portion of his bounty on thoſe who needed it the moſt. It is accordingly manifeſt, that, in ſprightlineſs and vivacity, in quickneſs of perception, in fertility of invention, in powers adapted to unbend the brow of the learned, to refreſh the over-laboured faculties of the wiſe, and to diffuſe throughout the family circle the enlivening and endearing ſmile of cheerfulneſs, the ſuperiority of the female mind is unrivalled.

Does man, vain of his pre-eminence in the track of profound inveſtigation, boaſt that the reſult of the enquiry is in his favour? Let him check the premature triumph, and liſten to the ſtatement of another article in the account, which, in the judgement of prejudice itſelf, will be found to reſtore the balance. As yet the native worth of the female character has been imperfectly developed. To eſtimate it fairly, the view muſt be extended from the compaſs and ſhades of intellect, to the diſpoſitions and feelings of the heart.

Were we called upon to produce examples of the moſt amiable tendencies and affections implanted in human nature, of modeſty, of delicacy, of ſympathiſing ſenſibility, of prompt and active benevolence, of warmth and tenderneſs of attachment; whither ſhould we at once turn our eyes? To the ſiſter, to the daughter, to the wife. Theſe endowments form the glory of the female ſex. They ſhine (*a*) amidſt the darkneſs of uncultivated

(*a*) The conjugal and parental affection of the women among the North American Indians is noticed by Captain Carver, and by other writers, who have deſcribed the ſavage tribes of the New World; and it appears the more conſpicuous in thoſe accounts, as the Reader cannot avoid contraſting it with the ſullen apathy of the men. In the late Admiral Byron's Narrative of the calamities endured by himſelf and his companions after their ſhipwreck near the Straits of Magellan, he records ſeveral very forcible and pleaſing inſtances of compaſſionate benevolence ſhewn to them by the female part of the families of their Indian conductors; inſtances which, like the former, appear with all the advantage of contraſt. I will not multiply authorities and quotations on a ſubject neither doubtful in itſelf, nor likely to ſeem doubtful to the Reader; but will produce, in the place of all further teſtimony, the unequivocal declaration of a man, who, like Ulyſſes of old,

"—— Mores hominum multorum vidit et urbes;"

cultivated barbariſm; they gave to civiliſed ſociety its brighteſt and moſt attractive luſtre.

The

had travelled with a mind bent on obſervation through widely-ſeparated diſtricts of the earth, and had experienced, in almoſt all the countries which he viſited, the utmoſt preſſure of misfortune. I give his evidence in his own words. "I have always remarked that women in all "countries are civil, obliging, tender, and humane; that "they are ever inclined to be gay and cheerful, timorous "and modeſt; and that they do not heſitate, like men, "to perform a generous action. Not haughty, not arro-"gant, not ſupercilious, they are full of courteſy, and "fond of ſociety; more liable, in general, to err than "man; but in general, alſo, more virtuous, and perform-"ing more good actions than he. To a woman, whe-"ther civiliſed or ſavage, I never addreſſed myſelf in the "language of decency and friendſhip, without receiving "a decent and friendly anſwer. With man it has often "been otherwiſe. In wandering over the barren plains "of inhoſpitable Denmark, through honeſt Sweden and "frozen Lapland, rude and churliſh Finland, unprin-"cipled Ruſſia, and the wide-ſpread regions of the wan-"dering Tartar; if hungry, dry, cold, wet, or ſick, the "women have ever been friendly to me, and uniformly "ſo. And to add to this virtue, ſo worthy the appellation "of benevolence, theſe actions have been performed in ſo "free and ſo kind a manner; that, if I was dry, I drank "the ſweeteſt draught, and if hungry, I eat the coarſe "morſel, with double reliſh."—See the Account of Mr. Ledyard

The priority of female excellence in the points now under conſideration, man is ſeldom undiſcerning enough to deny. But he not unfrequently endeavours to aggrandiſe his own merits, by repreſenting himſelf as characteriſed in return by ſuperior fortitude. In the firſt place, however, the reality of the fact alleged is extremely problematical. What if the female heart would recoil from the horrors of ſanguinary combat? The reſolution which is diſplayed in braving the perils of war is, in moſt men, to a very conſiderable degree, the effect of habit and of other extraneous cauſes. Courage is eſteemed the commoneſt qualification of a ſoldier. And why is it thus common? Not ſo much becauſe the ſtock of native reſolution, beſtowed on the generality of men, is very large; as becauſe that ſtock is capable of being increaſed by diſcipline, by habit, by ſympathy, by encouragement, by the dread of ſhame, by

Ledyard in the Proceedings of the Aſſociation for making Diſcoveries in the interior Parts of Africa. London, 1790, 4to. p. 44.

the

the thirſt of credit and renown, almoſt to an unlimited extent. The influence, however, of theſe cauſes is not reſtricted to men. In towns which have long ſuſtained the horrors of a ſiege, the deſcending bomb has been found, in numberleſs inſtances, ſcarcely to excite more alarm in the female part of the families of private citizens, than among their brothers (*b*) and huſbands.

(*b*) It would be eaſy to multiply examples from antient hiſtorians to prove that, among nations imperfectly civiliſed, women have frequently encountered, with unſhaken fortitude, the perils and viciſſitudes of military campaigns. Examples more recent may be found even in our own country. Dr. Henry, deſcribing, in his Hiſtory of England, (vol. v. p. 545.) the manners of the former part of the fifteenth century, obſerves, that "the ferocity of "thoſe unhappy times was ſo great, that it infected the "fair and gentle ſex, and made many ladies and gentle-"women take up arms, and follow the trade of war." He alſo quotes a writer of credit, who affirms, that "many "worthy ladies and gentlewomen, both French and Eng-"liſh," took part in the ſiege of Sens, during the year 1420; of whom "many began the feats of arms long "time ago, but of lying at ſieges now they begin firſt."

The influence of habit, not merely in diſſipating unreaſonable alarms, but in producing that kind of courage, which ought rather to be called inſenſibility of danger, is,

huſbands. But fortitude is not to be ſought merely on the rampart, on the deck, on the field of battle. Its place is no leſs in the chamber of ſickneſs and pain, in the retirements of anxiety, of grief, and of diſappointment. In bearing viciſſitudes of fortune, in exchanging wealth for penury, ſplendor for diſgrace, women ſeem, as far as experience has decided the queſtion, to have ſhewn themſelves little inferior to men.

is, in few inſtances, more evident than in the fearleſs unconcern with which the ſkirts of Mount Veſuvius, and of other volcanos, are inhabited; and the alacrity with which diſtricts repeatedly ravaged by eruptions are re-occupied. In theſe examples the female mind appears to be rendered as devoid of apprehenſion as that of the men. In the late eruption of Veſuvius, eighteen thouſand inhabitants, driven from Torre del Greco by an inundation of lava, which took its courſe through the centre of the town, returned, ere the ruins were yet cold, to rebuild their dwellings; and poſitively refuſed the offers, repeatedly made to them by the Neapolitan Government, of a ſettlement in a leſs dangerous ſituation. We do not hear that the female part of the community ſolicited their relations of the other ſex to accede to the propoſal; or that they remonſtrated againſt returning to the ſpot, from which the fiery deluge had expelled them.

With

With reſpect to ſupporting the languor and the acuteneſs of diſeaſe, the weight of teſtimony is wholly on the ſide of the weaker ſex. Aſk the profeſſors of the medical art, what deſcription of the perſons whom they attend exhibits the higheſt patterns of firmneſs, compoſure, and reſignation under tedious and painful trials; and they name at once their female patients. That a portion of this calm reſolution may not be reſolved, like ſome of the active bravery of the ſoldier, into the effects of diſcipline and habit, as women have in general leſs of robuſt health than men, I do not mean to contend. It has, indeed, been aſſerted, that women, in conſequence of the ſlighter texture of their frame, do not undergo, in the amputation of a limb, and in other caſes of corporal ſuffering, the ſame degree of anguiſh which is endured by the rigid muſcles and ſtubborn ſinews of perſons of the other ſex under ſimilar circumſtances; and that a ſmaller portion of fortitude is ſufficient to enable the former to bear the trial equally well with

with the latter. The aſſertion, however, appears to have been advanced not only without proof, but without the capability of proof. Who knows that the nerves are not as keenly ſenſible in a finer texture as in one more robuſt? Who knows that they are not more keenly ſenſible in the firſt than in the ſecond? Who can eſtimate the degree of pain, whether of body or of mind, endured by any individual except himſelf? How can any perſon inſtitute a compariſon, when of neceſſity, as it ſhould ſeem, he is wholly ignorant of one of the points to be compared? If, in the external indications of mental reſolution, women are not inferior to men; is a theory which admits not of experimental confirmation a reaſonable ground for pronouncing them inferior in the reality? Nor let it be deemed wonderful, that Providence ſhould have conferred on women in general a portion of original fortitude, not much inferior, to ſpeak of it in the loweſt terms compatible with truth, to that commonly implanted in perſons of the other ſex, on whom many

many more ſcenes of danger and of ſtrenuous exertion are devolved. If the natural tenderneſs of the female mind, cheriſhed, too, as that tenderneſs is in civiliſed nations, by the eſtabliſhed modes of eaſe, indulgence, and refinement, were not balanced by an ample ſhare of latent reſolution; how would it be capable of enduring the ſhocks and the ſorrows to which, amid the uncertainties of life, it muſt be expoſed? Finally, whatever may be the opinion adopted as to the preciſe amount of female fortitude, when compared with that of men, the former, I think, muſt at leaſt be allowed this relative praiſe: that it is leſs derived from the mechanical influence of habit and example than the latter; leſs tinctured with ambition; leſs blended with inſenſibility; and more frequently drawn from the only ſource of genuine ſtrength of mind, firm and active principles of religion.

The Reader will have been aware that the ſketch, which I have endeavoured to trace

trace in the preceding outlines, is that of the female character under its cuſtomary form; not under thoſe deviations from its uſual appearance, which are known ſometimes to occur. It is our firſt buſineſs to ſettle the general rule, not to particulariſe the exception. But amid the endleſs diverſity of nature; amid the innumerable multitudes of cotemporary individuals, diſtinguiſhed each from the other in their minds, no leſs than in their countenances, by ſtronger or fainter lines of difference, and thrown into a variety of ſituations and circumſtances, ſeverally calculated to call forth and improve particular talents, and encourage particular purſuits, exceptions will be frequent. Hence many inſtances might be produced from each ſex of perſons who have poſſeſſed a more than common ſhare of the qualities and diſpoſitions, which in ordinary caſes are found moſt conſpicuous in the other. It might even be poſſible to ſtate ſome examples of women who have ſcarcely been ſurpaſſed by the moſt eminent men in depth and comprehen-

prehenſiveneſs of intellect; and of men, who have nearly equalled their rivals of the other ſex in quickneſs of fancy, in delicacy of ſentiment, and in warmth of affection. There are alſo perſons of each ſex who are greatly deficient in thoſe qualifications, by which it was natural to expect that they would have been chiefly diſtinguiſhed. But all theſe caſes are variations from the general courſe of things; and variations on which, at preſent, it would be uſeleſs to enlarge.

Of the errors and vices which infeſt human nature, ſome are equally prevalent in the two ſexes; while others, in conſequence of the peculiarities by which the character of the one ſex is diſcriminated from that of the other, peculiarities which gain additional ſtrength from the diverſity in the offices of life reſpectively aſſigned to each, do not exerciſe an equal power over both. Thus, among women in whom feminine delicacy and feeling have not been almoſt obliterated, (I am not, at preſent, taking religious

ligious principle into the account,) intemperance in wine, and the uſe of language groſsly profane, are nearly unknown; and ſhe who ſhould be guilty of either crime, would be generally regarded as having debaſed herſelf to the level of a brute. On the other hand, there are failings and temptations to which the female mind is particularly expoſed by its native ſtructure and diſpoſitions. On theſe treacherous underminers, theſe inbred aſſailants, of female peace and excellence, the ſuperintending eye of education is ſtedfaſtly to be fixed. The remains of their unſubdued hoſtility will be among the circumſtances which will exerciſe even to the cloſe of life the moſt vigilant labours of conſcience. It is neceſſary, therefore, to be explicit on the ſubject.

The gay vivacity and the quickneſs of imagination, ſo conſpicuous among the qualities in which the ſuperiority of women is acknowledged, have a tendency to lead to unſteadineſs of mind; to fond-

neſs of novelty; to habits of frivolouſneſs, and trifling employment; to diſlike of ſober application; to repugnance to graver ſtudies, and a too low eſtimation of their worth; to an unreaſonable regard for wit, and ſhining accompliſhments; to a thirſt for admiration and applauſe; to vanity and affectation. They contribute likewiſe to endanger the compoſure and mildneſs of the temper, and to render the diſpoſitions fickle through caprice, and uncertain through irritability. Of the errors and failings which have been already ſpecified, ſeveral are occaſionally aggravated by the acute ſenſibility peculiar to women. Do we wonder that ſenſibility itſelf, ſingularly engaging and amiable as it is, ſhould ſhare the common lot of earthly bleſſings, and come not without its diſadvantages? There are drawbacks not hitherto noticed, by which its attractions are found to be accompanied. It is liable to ſudden exceſſes; it nurtures unmerited attachments; it is occaſionally the ſource of ſuſpicion, fretfulneſs, and groundleſs diſcontent; it

fome-

ſometimes degenerates into weakneſs and puſillanimity, and prides itſelf in the feebleneſs of character which it has occaſioned. Blended with maternal fondneſs, it appears in ſome inſtances almoſt incapable of diſcerning the faults of children; and becomes fatally indulgent to their deſires. In the intercourſe of ordinary life it has been known to look for a degree of affection, perhaps of ſudden affection, from friends and acquaintances, which could not reaſonably be expected; and, under the impulſe of groundleſs diſappointment, to reſent rather than cordially to accept the manifeſtations of ſincere and rational regard. And if in common it fills the heart with placability and benevolence; it is known at times to feel even a ſlight injury with ſo much keenneſs, as thenceforth to harbour prejudices ſcarcely to be ſhaken, and averſion ſcarcely to be mollified.

In one inſtance, if not in more, the delicacy of the female frame contributes,

in conjunction with ſome of the diſpoſitions already mentioned, to lead aſtray the underſtanding. The conſciouſneſs of the want of bodily ſtrength to repel violence diſpoſes women to value too highly in the other ſex the qualities of courage and ſpirit, to which they look for protection. Hence in part it ariſes, that they not only regard with admiration thoſe exertions of fortitude, which are truly laudable; but are even heard to beſtow applauſe on him who, conforming to a brutal and ſenſeleſs cuſtom in defiance of the laws of God and man, expoſes his own life, and ſeeks that of a fellow-creature, in a duel.

The moſt important of the conſequences flowing from theſe cauſes will hereafter be the ſubjects of incidental obſervation. At preſent it is ſufficient to have enumerated the cauſes themſelves. But in this place it is neceſſary to add, that there remains another ſource of female errors and temptations, which has not yet been noticed, becauſe it ſprings not from mental

pecu-

peculiarities; namely, the conſciouſneſs of being diſtinguiſhed by perſonal attractions. The effects of this conſciouſneſs on the female character, which, if conſidered by themſelves, are extremely ſtriking, and in many caſes are ultimately combined with thoſe which reſult from the qualities and diſpoſitions already ſpecified, will receive further notice in the progreſs of our enquiries.

CHAP. IV.

ON FEMALE EDUCATION.

In the preceding chapter ſome of the principal materials, on which the hand of education is to operate, were enumerated. The next object is to conſider how they are to be employed.

The early attainments deſirable to the one ſex are in ſo many points the ſame, or nearly the ſame, with thoſe which are important to the other, that ſeveral of the following remarks on the inſtruction of youth will neceſſarily be of a general nature. The culture, however, of the female mind is the point, to which they will all be directed.

The primary end of education is to train up the pupil in the knowledge, love, and application of thoſe principles of conduct,

which, under the ſuperintending influence of the divine mercy, will lead probably to a conſiderable ſhare of happineſs in the preſent life, but aſſuredly to a full meaſure of it in that which is to come. The ſecondary end is, to ſuperadd to the poſſeſſion of right principles thoſe improving and ornamental acquiſitions, which, either from their own nature, or from the prevailing cuſtoms of a particular age and country, are in ſome degree material to the comfort and to the uſefulneſs of the individual. The difference in point of importance which ſubſiſts between theſe two objects is ſuch, that the dictates of ſober judgement are palpably abandoned, whenever the latter is ſuffered, in the ſlighteſt manner, to encroach on the priority of the former. The modes of attaining both objects, and of purſuing the ſecond in due ſubordination to the firſt, require to be adjuſted according to the circumſtances which characteriſe the perſons who are to receive inſtruction. Hence in female education, that inſtructor is ignorant or regardleſs of

a duty of the higheſt concern, who, in transfuſing into the youthful hearer thoſe fundamental truths which equally concern every human being, does not anxiouſly point out their bearings on the particular weakneſſes and errors, whether in judgement or in action, into which the female ſex is in eſpecial danger of being betrayed. An attempt to efface the diſcriminating features, which the hand of God has impreſſed on the mind, is in every caſe impoſſible to accompliſh: and would be in every caſe, were it practicable, the height of folly and preſumption. To efface thoſe of the female mind, would be to deprive women of their diſtinguiſhing excellences. But to anticipate the miſtakes, to reſtrain the exceſſes, to guard againſt the unwarrantable paſſions, which originate in the very ſource whence thoſe excellences flow, is to confer on the workmanſhip of God the culture and the care which he intended that it ſhould receive from the hand of man. It is humbly to contribute towards the progreſs of its improvement that mite of aſſiſtance, which,

which, in the counſels of ſupreme wiſdom, he thought fit to leave dependent on human co-operation.

Are we then authoriſed, in point of fact, to affirm, that in this country, and in the preſent times, the inſtruction of young perſons of the female ſex is generally carried on with a ſyſtematic and due regard to each of the two purpoſes of education; and alſo, with lively and uniform ſolicitude to counteract the ſubductive errors and temptations, which derive much of their ſtrength from the peculiarities of the female character?

As the education of girls is ſometimes conducted at home, ſometimes at a public ſchool; any reply, which may be offered to the preceding queſtion, muſt refer diſtinctly to both plans.

In the inſtruction of perſons whom we believe to be deſtined to ſurvive the ſtroke of death, and to ſurvive in happineſs or in miſery

miſery proportioned to the nature of their conduct in this ſhort and preparatory ſcene of exiſtence, the main object to be purſued is to inſpire them with ſuch views of things, to train them to ſuch diſpoſitions and affections, to eſtabliſh them in ſuch principles and rules of action, as are calculated to render that future and moſt important ſtate of being, a period of bleſſedneſs. Such would ſtill have been the dictates of reaſon, had the reſult been likely to be unfavourable to happineſs in the preſent life. How forcibly, then, do they preſs upon thoſe who are convinced, as is the caſe with all who believe in the Chriſtian Revelation, that "godlineſs has the promiſe of the life "which now is, as well as of that which "is to come (*c*):" that the very ſame views of things, the very ſame affections and diſpoſitions, the very ſame principles and rules of action, which lead to never-ending felicity hereafter, promiſe in the common courſe of events a larger portion of external comforts than is attainable by any other

(*c*) 1 Tim. iv. 8.

means;

means; and are accompanied by a ſerenity of heart, and by a cheerful ſenſe of the protecting care of infinite Power, Wiſdom, and Goodneſs, which far more than outweigh the collected amount of all other terreſtrial enjoyments. The chief ſolicitude, therefore, of every one, who is called to fulfil the duties of tuition, ought to be this: to engage the underſtanding and the affections of the pupil in favour of piety and virtue, and to detach the mind from that ſupreme love of worldly objects to which it is prone, by unfolding the truth, the importance, and the inherent excellence of the Chriſtian religion: and by inculcating morality not as attainable by human ability without the Divine aſſiſtance, but as the fruit of Chriſtianity through the influence of the Holy Spirit; not as conſiſting in actions beneficial to ſociety, without reference to the motives from which they proceed, but as flowing from an earneſt deſire to pleaſe the Supreme Being by the exerciſe of juſtice and benevolence to man; not as ultimately reſting on independent principles and obligations

ligations of its own, but as founded on the precepts and ſanctions of the Goſpel, and forming one branch of human duty to God.

Is the truth of this poſition univerſally admitted? It is not. By ſome perſons, who, diſdaining the maxims of what they ſtyle the vulgar herd of mankind, aſſert pretenſions to ſuperior intelligence; and by others, who, from humility, from faſhion, from thoughtleſs indolence, or from ſelf-love ſuggeſting extravagant ideas as to the natural powers and diſpoſitions of mankind, have acquieſced in the authority of the former; an opinion preciſely the reverſe of this is maintained. We are told that the great buſineſs of Education is to guard the mind againſt the influence of prejudice: that of all prepoſſeſſions, thoſe which reſpect religion are the moſt dangerous and the moſt enſlaving; the moſt eaſy to be imbibed in childhood and youth; the moſt difficult when once imbibed, to be ſhaken off in the maturity of the

the underſtanding: that religion is therefore a ſubject which ought never to be brought forward as a matter of inſtruction, but rather to be entirely kept out of ſight during the courſe of education; in order that the young perſon, when judgement ſhall have acquired ſufficient ſtrength, may weigh with unbiaſſed diſcernment the contending creeds, which divide the well-informed part of mankind, and adopt that which ſhall be found conformable to reaſon and truth. Thus, it is aſſerted, and thus only, will belief be rational. Thus, and thus only, add ſome of the patrons of this opinion, who diſcloſe, intentionally or unintentionally, the ſecret ſentiment as to religion which the majority of them entertain, will the world be enabled to ſhake off the fetters of deluſion, prieſtcraft, and fanaticiſm; and children have a chance of being emancipated from the ſuperſtitions of their forefathers.

It will be proper to remove this obſtacle before we attempt to proceed further.

The

The human mind in infancy has been compared, and in ſome reſpects juſtly compared, to a blank ſheet of paper. In one material point, however, the compariſon fails. The ſheet of paper, depoſited on a ſhelf, or locked up in a drawer, continues a blank; it acquires no impreſſion of characters, until they are purpoſely imprinted by the hand of the writer. Is that the caſe with the youthful mind? If you forbear to impreſs it with ideas and ſentiments, can you prevent it from receiving impreſſions from the perſons and the objects with which it is daily converſant? As well might you forbid the calm ſurface of the lake to reflect the woods and rocks of the impending mountains. The mind, be it admitted, is originally an unſown field, prepared, it may be, for the reception of any crop. But if thoſe, to whom the culture of it belongs, neglect to fill it with good grain, it will ſpeedily and ſpontaneouſly be covered with weeds. If right principles of action are not implanted, wrong principles will ſprout up; if religion be not foſtered,

irreligion

irreligion will take root. The ſoil, in its natural ſtate, favors the growth of every noxious production. The experience of every one, who attends to the workings of his own heart, bears teſtimony to the truth of the ſcriptural doctrine concerning the inherent tendency to evil, which characteriſes human nature. To keep the mind during a ſeries of years in a ſtate of perfect indifference as to the truth or falſehood of the prevailing religion of the country, would be impoſſible. And the common effect, were the ſcheme feaſible, would be, that they who were brought up to the age of maturity without the ſlighteſt inclination to any particular religion, would either remain indifferent to all religion as long as they ſhould live; or, more probably, become bitter enemies of a Revelation irreconcilably adverſe to the diſpoſitions and habits which they would have acquired.

In the next place, let us be permitted to aſk thoſe declared enemies of every proceeding

ceeding which may bias the youthful mind, whether they act up to their own principles. Do they inculcate on their own children no elements of knowledge, no motives of action, no rules of conduct? They will expreſs ſurpriſe at the abſurdity of the queſtion. They will tell us, and they will tell us truly, and they will extend the obſervation to any topic which happens to be propoſed to them, religion excepted, that to train up children without knowledge, without maxims of moral behaviour, leſt their opinions on thoſe ſubjects ſhould be biaſſed, would be as unphiloſophical as it would be to prohibit them from walking, that when arrived at years of diſcretion they might decide, uninfluenced by the prejudices of habit, whether they would travel on two legs or on four. They will tell us, that they recommend to their offspring what they themſelves, as enquirers after knowledge, have ſeen reaſon to believe true, and have experienced to be uſeful; and that they alſo communicate the proofs of that truth and of that utility. It ſeems, then, that religion is the ſubject in which theſe

enemies

enemies of prejudice and enquirers after knowledge have diſcovered neither utility nor truth. Be it ſo. But why are not we, who believe Chriſtianity to be both true and ſuperlatively uſeful, and likewiſe indiſpenſably neceſſary, why are not we to recommend it to our children with earneſtneſs correſponding to our conviction of its certainty and importance; and thoroughly to inſtruct them in the evidence on which that conviction is eſtabliſhed?

The fact is, that whatever may be the ſpeculations of eccentric and ſceptical philoſophers, among perſons who believe and examine the Scriptures not a ſhadow of doubt can remain on the point in queſtion. In the ſacred volume we meet with precepts conformable to the repreſentation which it gives of human nature as inclined to evil, and as finding no preſervative from ſin and puniſhment but in religion. We hear in the Old Teſtament the invitation of David: "Come, ye children, hearken "unto me; I will teach you the fear of

" the Lord (*d*)." We hear Solomon thus addreſſing parents: " Train up a child in " the way he ſhould go, and when he is " old he will not depart from it (*e*)." We hear the voice of God himſelf ſpeaking thus in ſignal commendation of Abraham: " I " know that he will command his children " and his houſehold after him, and they " ſhall keep the way of the Lord (*f*)." We hear the Almighty repeatedly admoniſhing the Iſraelites to be diligent in teaching their children his laws, and the wonders which he had wrought for their fathers (*g*). The New Teſtament reiterates the ſame leſſon. Our Saviour's reproof of thoſe, who would not ſuffer the little children to come unto him (*h*), might of itſelf, perhaps, incline us to forebode his diſpleaſure againſt perſons who, in future times, ſhould not ſuffer them to come to the knowledge of his goſpel. But the point is not left to reſt

(*d*) Pſalm xxxiv. 11. (*e*) Proverbs, xxii. 6.
(*f*) Gen. xviii. 19. (*g*) Deut. iv. 10. vi. 7—20; xi. 19.
(*h*) Matt. xix. 14. Mark, x. 14. Luke, xviii. 16.

on

on preſumptions. St. Paul, in expreſsly commanding children to "obey their pa-"rents *in the Lord* (*i*)," and becauſe their obedience "*is well pleaſing unto the Lord* (*k*)," gives a deciſive proof of his own judgement, that children ought to be inſtructed in the religion of Chriſt. In perfect conformity with this judgement the ſame apoſtle congratulates a favourite convert, becauſe, to uſe his own words, "from a child thou haſt "known the ſcriptures, which are able to "make thee wiſe unto ſalvation, through "faith, which is in Chriſt Jeſus (*l*)." And in another place he expreſsly commands parents, in terms which alone would have been ſufficient to decide the queſtion, "to "bring up their children in the nurture "and admonition of the Lord (*m*)."

From the reſult of ſuch enquiries as I have been able to make on the ſubject, it appears that, in the generality of public ſe-

(*i*) Epheſ. vi. 1. (*k*) Coloſſ. iii. 20.
(*l*) 2 Tim. iii. 15. (*m*) Epheſ. vi. 4.

minaries and boarding-ſchools, this momentous object of religious inſtruction is by no means purſued either with proper earneſtneſs or in a judicious manner; and that, in ſome, the attention which it occupies merits no better appellation than that of form, and ſerves only to impoſe on the parents of the children who are placed there, and to fill the young mind with contempt, or at leaſt with unconcern, as to the moſt awful of all conſiderations. There may be particular exceptions; but that the ſtate of the caſe, on the whole, both in the metropolis and in the country, accords with this repreſentation, ſeems to be a fact, which, unhappily, admits not of diſpute.

On the want of due earneſtneſs with regard to the inculcation of religion in public ſeminaries, I mean not to dwell at preſent; as I ſhall, ere long, be under the neceſſity of recurring to the ſubject, when the mode in which the objects comprehended under the ſecond branch of Education are purſued, and the degree of attention which they in general

general receive, come to be diſcuſſed. The uſual defect of judgement, in the manner of impreſſing the principles and injunctions of Chriſtianity, appears to me to conſiſt in theſe two circumſtances. Firſt, they are commonly inculcated in the form of a dry and authoritative lecture, without being placed in a full light and in their proper colours, without being applied and illuſtrated in ſuch a method as to create a deeply-rooted conviction of the influence which they claim over every period and every action of life, or to intereſt the affections of the opening mind. Hence religion appears particularly dull and unattractive; and is rather dreaded as an auſtere monitor and a relentleſs judge, than loved as the giver of preſent and future happineſs (*n*). Secondly, they are preſented to the

(*n*) In ſome boarding-ſchools a general mode of puniſhment has been to oblige the offender to tranſcribe, or to get by rote, one or more chapters of the Bible. In ſome few caſes, when the offence is a flagrant violation of a precept of religion, and the ſelected portion of Scripture relates im-

the underſtanding rather as truths to be implicitly received on the credit of the teacher, and on the ground of their eſtabliſhed prevalence, than as truths reſting on the ſolid baſis of fact and argument, and inviting at all times the cloſeſt inveſtigation of their certainty which the mind is capable of beſtowing. Hence, when a young woman begins to act for herſelf on the ſtage of life, and a growing confidence in her own judgement, together with the effect of new ſcenes and ſituations which incidentally ariſe, leſſens the eſtimation in which ſhe once held the opinions of her inſtructors; it is ſcarcely poſſible but that her regard for religion, which, whether greater or leſs, was in a conſiderable degree derived from that eſtimation, muſt at the ſame time be impaired. And if ſhe ſhould be thrown, as in theſe days of widely-extended intercourſe is not

mediately to the crime, the practice may be adviſable. But, uſed as a general and indiſcriminate method of puniſhment, it ſeems one of the apteſt plans that could be deviſed to render the Bible odious to all the inhabitants of the ſchool.

very

very improbable, into habits of familiarity with perſons who in practice ſlight ſome of the injunctions of the Goſpel, who are devoid of the general ſpirit which it inculcates, or who doubt or diſbelieve its divine origin; is it wonderful that her faith ſhould waver, when ſhe feels herſelf at once allured by temptations, and unable to give one ſatisfactory reaſon for crediting the book which commands her to reſiſt them? I am aware that during a certain period of childhood it is true, no leſs in the caſe of religion than of other branches of inſtruction, that the truth and the propriety of many things muſt be received by the pupil on the credit of the inſtructor; becauſe the mind is not then competent to judge of the proofs by which they are eſtabliſhed. Yet, even during that period, it ſeems to me generally deſirable, and particularly on the ſubject of religion, that the pupil ſhould be appriſed both of this neceſſity and of the cauſe of it: and ſhould be taught to expect that ample information will be afforded as ſoon as ſhe ſhall become

fully capable of underſtanding it. As the intellectual faculties expand, the more obvious proofs of revealed religion ought to be gradually developed. And, in the concluding years of education, the preſcribed ſtudies unqueſtionably ought to comprehend the leading evidences of Chriſtianity, arranged with ſimplicity, but in a regular order; conveyed in familiar, but not unintereſting language; compriſed within a moderate compaſs; and diveſted of learned references, and critical diſquiſitions (*o*).

When girls are educated at home, though in the article of religious inſtruction the two defects already ſpecified are found to ſubſiſt in a conſiderable degree, it generally occupies more attention than it

(*o*) If there ſhould be no exiſting ſummary of the evidences of Chriſtianity, which is entirely ſuited to the particular purpoſe in view, it could not be difficult to compile one from the excellent treatiſes on the ſubject already before the public. And I truſt that ſome of thoſe perſons, who have ſo meritoriouſly diſtinguiſhed themſelves by works calculated to improve the courſe of female education, will be induced to undertake the taſk.

obtains

obtains in ſchools, and is conducted with greater judgement. In families in which juſt ſentiments of Chriſtian duty prevail, it is rightly deemed that firſt object of education, which, ſtanding pre-eminent, by itſelf, excludes all others, not from equality only, but from compariſon. Where Chriſtian principles are leſs active, it is proportionally neglected. But if we aſſume, and in the majority of inſtances it will ſurely be no unfair aſſumption, that the mother is equally alive to their influence with the conductreſs of the ſchool, to whom her daughter, if ſent from home, would be committed; it is evident that the warmth and the ſolicitude of parental affection will impel her to ſuch a degree of earneſtneſs and diligence in preſſing on her child thoſe truths which ſhe deems of the greateſt moment to the preſent and eternal happineſs of the latter, as a ſtranger, urged by no ſuch powerful motives, cannot be expected to attain. In the regulation of the temper, no inconſiderable branch of practical religion, the mother, to whom

whom each peculiarity that marks the diſpoſitions of the child is thoroughly known, has a decided advantage over the ſchool-miſtreſs; who has neither poſſeſſed the ſame opportunities of diſcovering them, nor is likely to ſtudy them with the ſame attention and perſeverance, nor is able, with the ſame facility, to accommodate her ſettled modes of inſtruction to remedy what is amiſs. And as to the proſpect of ſucceſs in diſcerning and applying ſuitable methods of winning the heart to the ſide of piety and rectitude, the ſuperiority of the mother will in moſt caſes be ſtill more apparent. For though in communicating knowledge on ſubjects, which addreſs themſelves excluſively to the underſtanding, ſhe may not be altogether equal to a perſon trained by long experience in the profeſſion of teaching; yet in every attempt to render knowledge amiable in the eyes of the pupil, and to lead the affections to bear their reaſonable part in preparing the heart for the ſervice of God, and animating it with the deſire of diffuſing happineſs among mankind,

mankind, ſhe will come to the undertaking with advantages, which no one but ſo near a relation can enjoy. That inſtructor who is loved the beſt will commonly prove the moſt efficacious. In every point which has been ſpecified, but eſpecially in the laſt, the mother will be found to derive from her unrivalled claim to the fond attachment of the child, an influence far exceeding that of any other teacher. Theſe circumſtances of ſuperiority, all of which, be it remembered, relate to the moſt important of human concerns, afford a general and very ſtrong ground of preference to the domeſtic plan of education for the female ſex, whenever the adoption of it is practicable, and conſiſtent with other duties. It muſt be obſerved too, that, when children are brought up at home, to guard them from being cloſely entangled in the pernicious ſociety of thoſe who are not ſo well principled as themſelves, is ſeldom a very difficult taſk. In a boarding-ſchool the taſk would be impracticable. Thrown into the promiſcuous multitude of good and bad,

your child will form her intimacies not with ſuch as are the moſt deſerving, but with ſuch as are the moſt agreeable. And if they, whom ſhe ſelects for her aſſociates and friends, unite, and the union is not uncommon, agreeable qualities with bad diſpoſitions, ſhe can ſcarcely fail of being, in ſome meaſure, corrupted. Such is the unhappy propenſity of the human heart to evil, that one worthleſs girl is ſometimes found to contaminate the greater part of a ſchool.

But in whatever place, and in whatever manner, religious inſtruction be communicated, let it be addreſſed to the heart no leſs aſſiduouſly than to the underſtanding. The obedience which God requires is a cheerful obedience: not that which proceeds merely from the conviction of the judgement, but that which flows alſo from the decided bias of purified inclinations, and is at once the performance of duty and the perception of delight. Let religion be painted in the attractive colours which belong to it. Let it not however be miſ-

repre-

repreſented or diſguiſed, with the hope that in appearance it may thus be rendered more amiable. The ſcheme is as fooliſh as it is needleſs and criminal. Let the truth be fully diſcloſed. Let the awful ſentence denounced againſt the unrepenting ſinner be impreſſed no leſs ſtrongly than the rewards prepared for the righteous. Let it not be diſſembled that a life of holineſs, "without which no one ſhall ſee "the Lord," is a life of watchfulneſs and exertion; and has difficulties inſuperable without aſſiſtance from above. But let the undeſerved and unparalleled love of God to man be continually and diſtinctly developed. Let it be exemplified as extended to the pupil herſelf, and to every individual, in the gift of life; in daily and hourly preſervation and ſupport; in the pleaſures reſulting from the grand and beautiful works of Creation; in the ſtupendous mercies of redemption, the expiation of ſin, the ſanctifying aid of divine grace, the recovery of life and happineſs everlaſting, purchaſed by the death of

of Jeſus Chriſt. Let it be ſhewn that, if ſorrow be the lot of humanity, the fatherly chaſtiſement is deſigned for the ultimate good of the afflicted. Let it be ſhewn that, if numbers have to look forward to miſery hereafter, it is becauſe they will not repent and be ſaved; and that "it is not "the will of our Heavenly Father, that "any one of his children ſhould periſh."

In the cultivation of the female underſtanding eſſential improvements have taken place in the preſent age. Both in ſchools and in private families there prevails a deſire to call forth the reaſoning powers of girls into action, and to enrich the mind with uſeful and intereſting knowledge ſuitable to their ſex. The foundation is laid by communicating to the ſcholar a rational inſight into the formation and idioms of her native tongue. The grammatical blunders, which uſed to diſgrace the converſation even of women in the upper and middle ranks of life, and in conjunction with erroneous orthography to deform their epiſtolary

tolary correſpondence, are already ſo much diminiſhed, that in ſome years hence it may perhaps no longer be eaſy to find a young lady, who profeſſes to be miſtreſs of the French language, and is at the ſame time groſsly ignorant of her own. Geography, ſelect parts of natural hiſtory, and of the hiſtory of different nations, antient or modern, popular and amuſing facts in aſtronomy and in other ſciences, are often familiar to the daughter in a degree which, at the very moment that it delights the parent, reminds her how ſmall a portion of ſuch information was in her youth imparted to herſelf. Of the books, alſo, which have been publiſhed within the laſt twenty years for the purpoſe of conveying inſtruction to girls, though ſome of them approach too nearly to the ſtyle and ſentiments of romances, a conſiderable number poſſeſſes great merit; and moſt of them are abundantly more adapted to intereſt the young reader, and thus to make a lively and permanent impreſſion on her underſtanding, than thoſe were which they have ſucceeded.

Some

Some improvement, too, though certainly not ſo much as is deſirable, appears to have taken place in the choice of French books uſed at ſchools and in domeſtic education (*p*). And learners of that language are perhaps called upon leſs frequently than was heretofore the caſe, to convert the exerciſes of religion into French leſſons (*q*).

If we eſtimate the peculiar advantages of private and of public tuition, ſuppoſing each

(*p*) It is to be hoped that ſome very improper French works, formerly admitted into ſeminaries of inſtruction, will ſoon be altogether excluded. Such have heretofore been in complete poſſeſſion of every ſchool-room, and ſtill retain their place in ſome.

(*q*) The practice of requiring children to employ French Prayer-books and Bibles in accompanying the officiating miniſter through the Engliſh ſervice, ought to be univerſally aboliſhed. Its effect is to withdraw the mind from every ſentiment of devotion, and to make the acquiſition of a few foreign words and phraſes rank higher than the heartfelt performance of public worſhip. It may be poſſible that perſons of complete proficiency in the French language might uſe the books in queſtion without diſtraction of thought, or diminution of religious fervour. But this is not the proficiency of children.

ſyſtem to be practicable, with reſpect to the inſtruction of girls in the various branches of uſeful knowledge, thoſe attending the former plan will be found to preponderate. For when that ſyſtem is adopted, the inſtructors are commonly under the ſuperintendence of the parent of the pupil, or of ſome perſon of the family who poſſeſſes much of the authority of a parent; and are thus kept up to a higher ſtandard of active exertion than is generally to be expected in a ſchool. And as their attention is confined to a very ſmall number of pupils, perhaps to an individual; their exertions are likely to be more productive than thoſe of another perſon poſſeſſed of equal qualifications, but obliged to diſtribute her labours over a numerous claſs. It may be added, that a teacher, whoſe care is reſtricted to three or four, perhaps to fewer ſcholars, will probably feel a greater degree of reſponſibility as to their advancement, and a fuller conviction that her own credit depends on the event, than is uſually felt by an inſtructreſs at a ſchool with reſpect to any parti-

cular ſcholar. The former, reſting her character on the ſucceſs of a ſingle inſtance, is impelled to beſtow proportionate diligence upon it. The latter, depending on the reſult of many, has leſs at ſtake in each. If the pupils of the former make ſlow progreſs, their deficiency cannot fail to be obſerved: and they are the only cotemporary teſtimonies of ſkill and diligence which ſhe has to produce. The latter, if the improvement of ſome of her ſcholars be but ſmall, may hope that their backwardneſs will eſcape notice in the crowd; or, at leaſt, that it will be noticed with little diſgrace to herſelf among other and more favourable examples of her care. The former, alſo, if ſhe feels, in an equal degree with the latter, a pernicious propenſity very general in ſchools, to beſtow pains chiefly on thoſe children whoſe abilities and quickneſs point them out as moſt likely to do honour to their inſtructreſs, is much leſs at liberty to indulge it.

Theſe points of ſuperiority in domeſtic tuition over a public ſchool muſt be counterbalanced,

terbalanced, if they are to be counterbalanced at all, by the beneficial conſequences generally expected to reſult from the emulation which is commonly ſeen to take place where numbers are collected, and occupied in the ſame purſuits. For whatever weight might remain to be thrown into the oppoſite ſcale, were the beſt method of educating boys the object of enquiry; with reſpect to the inſtruction of girls, to which alone our inveſtigation relates, there ſeems no other peculiar advantage, general in its nature and alſo conſiderable in its weight, to be alleged by the advocate of the boarding-ſchool. Blindneſs to the faults of the child, reluctance, proceeding from miſtaken tenderneſs, to the exertions neceſſary for their correction, and unſteadineſs as to ſchool-hours reſulting from domeſtic incidents and habits, theſe and other circumſtances which might be ſpecified, though very ſerious evils whenever they take place, are ſurely not the common characteriſtics of parental management. If it be ſaid that

more ſkilful teachers are to be found in ſchools than can be obtained at home; it may be replied in the firſt place, that the aſſertion is by no means univerſally true: and, in the ſecond place, that when it is corroborated by facts, it can claim little influence on the preſent argument. For when a compariſon is made between the benefits, which reſpectively characteriſe the ſyſtems of private and of public education; it cannot be ſuppoſed to extend beyond thoſe caſes, in which teachers of competent ability may be obtained on either plan. Now the beneficial conſequences of emulation, as ſet forth by its ableſt advocates, do not appear by any means ſufficient, when fairly appreciated, to compenſate the loſs of the advantages which have been ſeverally ſtated as accompanying the plan of domeſtic inſtruction. But it is further to be obſerved, that theſe beneficial conſequences, whatever may be their amount, are far from being unmixed with evils; with evils, I mean, that tend directly to leſſen, in ſome reſpects, the collective

quantity

quantity of knowledge acquired at the ſchool, and ſo far to counteract the very object in promoting of which the whole excellence of emulation is confeſſedly placed by thoſe who are loudeſt in its praiſe. For when the ſpirit of competition has ſeized a ſchool, how often does it happen that, while girls of talents and reſolution are puſhed on by their ardour to exertions which would not otherwiſe have been excited; and to exertions, be it remembered, which not unfrequently impair their health, conſtrain them to a ceſſation from the buſineſs of the claſs, and prove ultimately to have impeded rather than to have accelerated their progreſs; thoſe who are diſtinguiſhed by diffidence and timidity, and thoſe whoſe abilities are but ſlender, are depreſſed below their natural level? Conceiving, or learning by ineffectual trials, that they are unable to keep pace with the augmented ſpeed of their former companions; and, too often, finding the encouraging favour of their teachers diminiſhed in proportion as they need it the

more, they become leſs and leſs anxious for the acquiſition of knowledge, grow remiſs and languid in the purſuit of it, and ſink into liſtleſſneſs, inactivity, and deſpondence.

Emulation, however, which from its influence on the acquiſition of knowledge has neceſſarily called for attention in this part of our enquiry, muſt not be coldly diſmiſſed without further notice. Thoſe of its effects, favourable and unfavourable, which have been already mentioned, are by far the leaſt important of the conſequences with which it is accompanied. Whatever may be thought by different obſervers, as to the caſes and the degrees in which it enlarges the ſum of intellectual attainments; yet, among thoſe who poſſeſs and improve opportunities of judging from experience, there ſurely can be but one opinion as to the general reſult of its operation on the diſpoſitions of the heart. The truth is, that of all principles of action it is one of the moſt dangerous.

It

It ſtimulates and nouriſhes ſome of the darkeſt paſſions of the human mind; and ſubverts thoſe motives, and undermines thoſe ſentiments and affections, which it is one main purpoſe of Chriſtianity to inculcate and enforce. Self-conceit, a ſupercilious contempt of perſons ſuppoſed, and often falſely ſuppoſed, of inferior attainments; proneneſs to ſuſpect teachers of being prejudiced and partial, and aſſiduous endeavours to conciliate their favour by fineſſe; a ſecret wiſh that it were poſſible to retard the progreſs of ſucceſsful competitors; an envious deſire to detract from their merits; and a gradually increaſing averſion to their ſociety, and indifference to their welfare, are among its uſual effects. But it will be ſaid, that a tendency to theſe malignant feelings, theſe artful manœuvres, is inherent in human nature; and that it is unfair to load emulation with the guilt. In part the aſſertion is true. The embers of the evil exiſt deep within us, and will ſhew themſelves under the moſt active and ſagacious efforts to ex-

tinguiſh them. But emulation is the agent which, perhaps at every period of life, and undoubtedly in childhood and youth, moſt ſucceſsfully fans them into a flame.

Are we not, then, to avail ourſelves, it will be ſaid, in the proceſs of inſtruction, of the influence of compariſon and example? Is it not lawful, is it not beneficial, to apply to children a ſtimulus, which is applied without reproach and with viſible advantage, to kindle ardour, to rouſe exertion, and to confirm good conduct, in maturer years? In the adminiſtration of public affairs, in the profeſſional management of buſineſs, in the proceedings of domeſtic life, is it not with equal frequency and wiſdom that models of excellence and patterns of demerit are ſet before men engaged in correſponding occupations; the former to excite them to virtue, the latter to deter them from vice? Does not Revelation itſelf authoriſe and ſanctify the practice, when one ſacred writer directs thoſe whom he addreſſes to "take

"the

"the prophets for an example of patient "suffering (*r*);" and another enjoins his converts to follow himself as their ensample (*s*); and repeatedly compares his own acquisitions with those of others who were employed in the same pursuits with himself, at one time declaring that in his youth "he profited more than his equals "in years (*t*);" and at another, that in his riper age "he was not a whit behind the "very chiefest of the apostles (*u*)," inferior in no point, in labours and in sufferings more abundant (*x*)? To compare our own conduct and attainments with those of others, that we may the more clearly perceive our defects, and be incited to imitate a meritorious example, is a practice in many cases both justifiable and useful. It is consequently a practice fit to be recommended on suitable occasions, and with proper explanation, to those to whom we are to impart instruction. But to

(*r*) James, v. 10. (*s*) Phil. iii. 17. (*t*) Gal. i. 14.
(*u*) 2 Cor. xi. 5. (*x*) 2 Cor. xi. 22, 23.

compare

compare that we may imitate, is not the ſame thing as to compare that we may rival. And emulation includes, not in name only, but in reality, the idea and the ſpirit of rivalſhip. In this circumſtance conſiſts the danger and the miſchief of the principle. Rivalſhip is the nurſe of pride, of envy, of detraction, of malevolence. We are all prone to harbour unkind ſentiments towards thoſe by whom we feel ourſelves ſurpaſſed, eſpecially if we were for ſome time level with them in the race. We find it more eaſy to depreciate than to equal them. And to hate thoſe whom we have injured, is one of thoſe inherent diſpoſitions of the human heart which are viſible even in childhood. In the next place let it not be forgotten, that emulation, as called forth in ſchools, is commonly directed to ſubjects widely differing from thoſe in which St. Paul and the other ſacred penmen exhorted their diſciples to endeavour to excel. It is not an emulation in humility, in patience, in charity,

charity, in piety, and holineſs (*y*); but in ſkill in languages, and other branches of knowledge; or more frequently, in merely ornamental accompliſhments. The convert who ſtrove, according to the Apoſtle's direction, to imitate the propoſed pattern of Chriſtian virtue, if he was truly influenced by that religious impreſſion under which he profeſſed to act, could not feel genuine emulation. The malignity, the ſpirit of rivalſhip was excluded by the nature of the object in view, and of the motives which inſtigated the purſuit. So far was he from being vain of his progreſs in religious attainments, that the farther he advanced, the more conſcious was he of the extent of his deficiencies,

(*y*) Theſe are the points in which St. Paul ſought, by praiſing the believing Gentiles, "to provoke the Jews to "emulation," according to the expreſſion in our Bible; or, as the original term (παραζηλοω) might have been better rendered, "to excite them to zeal." If it be thought that emulation, as the term is properly to be underſtood, is countenanced by this paſſage of Scripture; let it alſo be remembered, that "emulations" (ζηλοι) are placed by the ſame Apoſtle in the dark catalogue of crimes, which exclude from the kingdom of God. Gal. v. 20, 21.

and

and the more humbled by that conſciouſneſs. So far was he from wiſhing that it were in his power actually to lower the excellences of his fellow-Chriſtian with whom he compared himſelf, and from ſeeking to lower them in the eſtimation of others, that he rejoiced in diſplaying them for general edification. And if at any time he was himſelf made the inſtrument of advancing them by his counſel and encouragement to higher degrees of virtue; he beheld with augmented joy the increaſe of their preſent luſtre, and the proſpect of an addition to their eternal reward. Is this the temper of mind produced in ſchools and ſeminaries by emulation? Is the principle, which commonly produces the directly oppoſite temper, an agent ſafe to be employed either in a boarding-ſchool or in a private family? Is it wiſe, is it Chriſtian conduct, ſpontaneouſly and needleſsly to incur ſo great a riſk of foſtering in the youthful breaſt thoſe paſſions, which, even if they are combated in early years with the moſt anxious vigilance,

lance, will ſhew themſelves but too powerful amidſt the future ſtruggles and competitions of life?

In carrying on every branch of education there is no practical rule more entitled by its importance to ſtedfaſt attention than this: that the pupil ſhould be impreſſed with a conviction, that whenever ſhe is directed to purſue a particular courſe of ſtudy, the direction is reaſonable; in other words, that ſhe ſhould perceive the matter enjoined to be evidently uſeful in itſelf, or ſhould be ſatisfied that it is required by competent authority. When the underſtanding is not ripe enough to comprehend the utility of the attainment, let the obligation of compliance be ſhewn to reſt on the ſubmiſſion due to the deciſion of parents, and of thoſe who ſtand in the place of parents; and let the duty of ſubmiſſion be clearly traced to that ſtandard of rectitude to which the mind ought to be habituated from the days of childhood conſtantly to refer—the revealed word of God.

God. As the faculties open, let the advantages to be expected from the acquiſition of the knowledge in queſtion be proportionably unfolded. But in developing them let not the inſtructor fail to dwell on this frequently neglected leſſon, that their uſe conſiſts in the increaſed power and opportunities which they afford to their poſſeſſor, of recommending herſelf to her Maker's favour by manifeſting obedience to his laws, and by doing good to her fellow-creatures; and that, for their faithful application to theſe purpoſes, ſhe will ſtand reſponſible hereafter. When the diligence of the teacher has ſtamped theſe principles, the fundamental principles of rectitude in all human conduct, on the breaſt of the ſcholar; then is the time, amidſt unceaſing care to refreſh the impreſſion whenever it ſeems in any degree to fail; then is the time to give that additional incitement to active exertion which may be derived from the influence of example. Then let thoſe to whom that incitement is neceſſary, and to whom it may be

be addreſſed without danger, be exhorted to compare their own remiſſneſs with the diligence of their more induſtrious companions. But let them be diſtinctly and uniformly inſtructed that the object of the compariſon is to diſcover their own deficiencies, in order that, on principles of duty, they may be corrected, not to enter into a perſonal conteſt for pre-eminence with the other party; that in contemplating ſuperior merit, they are not to envy, but to admire; to copy, not to emulate.

To impart to the youthful ſcholar thoſe acquiſitions which are deſired either conſiderably or entirely on the ſcore of ornament, conſtitutes, as was ſtated in the outſet, the ſecond branch of Education. That this branch of education is not at preſent undervalued or neglected in our own country, is a fact, which even a ſlight knowledge of the general proceedings and opinions of parents in the upper and middle claſſes of ſociety would be ſufficient to eſtabliſh beyond the probability

of diſpute. Two queſtions remain to be propoſed. Firſt, whether it is valued and cultivated too much? Secondly, whether the prevailing modes of cultivating it are judicious: that is to ſay, whether it is kept ſubordinate, and ſufficiently ſubordinate, to the primary object of inſtruction, the inculcation of thoſe radical principles on which preſent and future happineſs depends; and whether, in the manner as well as in the degree of carrying it on, due regard is paid to the peculiar characteriſtics of the female mind, and to the impreſſions, the errors, and the dangers to which, in conſequence of thoſe native peculiarities, the ſcholar is expoſed? The anſwer which muſt be given to theſe queſtions, an anſwer to be deduced from general practice, not from a few ſcattered exceptions, is not the reply which it were highly to be wiſhed that truth would have permitted to be returned. In ſchools, almoſt univerſally, and very commonly, I fear, in domeſtic tuition, ornamental accompliſhments occupy the rank and eſtimation

mation which ought to have been aſſigned to objects of infinitely greater importance. Not that the pupil, when this perverſion of rational arrangement takes place, is expreſsly inſtructed that to acquire and to diſplay ornamental attainments is the firſt buſineſs of life. Quite the contrary. She is probably told once in a week, perhaps ſomewhat oftener, that to do her duty to God and her fellow-creatures in the manner which the Bible enjoins, is the object of real conſequence. But what is the effect of a dry precept heard periodically from the pulpit or in a lecture-room, and coldly repeated on incidental occaſions by a teacher, to the power of daily habit? If a girl is treated by her inſtructors, if ſhe is taught to labour and to act, in the way that would be reaſonable if to improve in perſonal grace, to ſtudy faſhionable decorations of the body and of the mind, were the appointed purpoſes of her exiſtence: if ſhe is thus treated, if ſhe is taught thus to labour and to act, and with diſpoſitions inclining her, by a natural

bias, to lean towards that perſuaſion; will a few ſhort admonitions, formally interſperſed and reluctantly heard, counteract the danger? Will it be wonderful if, when ſhe ſhall be ſet at liberty from the reſtraint of ſuperintendents, her conduct in life ſhall correſpond to the way in which ſhe was regularly accuſtomed to act, rather than to what ſhe was occaſionally directed to believe? Is it ſurpriſing that a young woman ſhould give free ſcope to the deſires, which ſhe has ever been led to cheriſh; that ſhe ſhould practiſe the arts, in which her childhood was initiated? Is it ſurpriſing that ſhe, when grown up, ſhould ſtarve herſelf into ſhapelineſs, and overſpread her face with paint, who was trained at a boarding-ſchool to ſwing daily by the chin, in order to lengthen her neck, and perhaps even accuſtomed, as is ſometimes the caſe, to peculiar modes of diſcipline contrived to heighten the complexion? If ſhe was taught throughout the whole courſe of her education, though not by expreſs precept, yet by daily and hourly admo-

admonitions which could convey no other meaning, that dancing is for diſplay, that muſic is for diſplay, that drawing and French and Italian are for diſplay; can it be a matter of aſtoniſhment, that during the reſt of her life ſhe ſhould be inceſſantly on the watch to ſhine and to be admired?

Let the importance of a rule which has been already ſuggeſted, and the little regard which it experiences in many ſchools and in many private families, be my apology for recalling it once more to the mind of the reader. The pupil, whatever may be the ſubject in which ſhe is inſtructed, ſhould be led diſtinctly to underſtand, as early as her faculties are equal to the exertion, the general reaſons for which it is expedient that ſhe ſhould attain that particular qualification, and the general purpoſes to which, when attained, it is to be applied. If there be any caſes in which the obſervance of this rule is of eſpecial moment, it is in thoſe in which, from the natural peculiarities of the female cha-

racter, there exiſts a more than common danger that the object for which the attainment is ſought will be miſconceived by the ſcholar; and that, in conſequence of that miſconception, or of other probable contingencies, the attainment itſelf will, in proceſs of time, become a ſource of formidable temptations. The ornamental acquiſitions which have been ſpecified, and other ſimilar accompliſhments included within the plan of female education, fall preciſely within this deſcription. Let the pupil, then, be thoroughly impreſſed with a conviction of the real end and uſe of all ſuch attainments; namely, that they are deſigned, in the firſt place, to ſupply her hours of leiſure with innocent and amuſing occupations; occupations which may prevent the languor and the ſnares of idleneſs, render home attractive, refreſh the wearied faculties, and contribute to preſerve the mind in a ſtate of placid cheerfulneſs, which is the moſt favourable to ſentiments of benevolence to mankind and of gratitude to God: and in the next place,

place, to enable her to communicate a kindred pleaſure, with all its beneficial effects, to her family and friends, to all with whom ſhe is now, or may hereafter be, intimately connected. In addition to this general view of the purpoſes of ornamental accompliſhments, let any prominent advantage, by which one is diſtinguiſhed from another, be noted with the degree of attention which it deſerves. If, for example, the uſes of muſic are explained, let not its effect in heightening devotion be overlooked. If drawing is the ſubject of remark, let the ſtudent be taught habitually to contemplate in the works of creation the power, the wiſdom, and the goodneſs of their Author. If juſt conceptions reſpecting the end of theſe and all ſimilar acquiſitions are not ſedulouſly implanted in the breaſt of the ſcholar, ideas of a very different nature will prevail. And when a young woman ſteps forth into active life, graced with ſplendid accompliſhments, and poſſeſſed with an opinion that ſhe is to employ them in outſhining her aſſociates and competi-

tors; her proficiency may fitly be to thoſe, who are truly concerned for her welfare, a matter of ſorrow rather than of congratulation.

The miſtaken opinions reſpecting the proper end of perſonal accompliſhments, and the extravagant opinions of their worth, which either the inculcation of wrong principles on the ſubject, or the neglect of impreſſing thoſe which are juſt, eſtabliſhes in the youthful mind, extend their influence to all matters ſimilar in their nature to ſuch accompliſhments, and capable of being united with them in promoting one common purpoſe. Hence that fondneſs for the arts of dreſs and exterior decoration, to which the female ſex, anxious to call in every adventitious aid to heighten its native elegance and beauty, feels itſelf inclined by an inherent bias, is ſtimulated and cheriſhed in the years of childhood; and inſtead of being ſedulouſly taught to reſtrict itſelf within the bounds which reaſon and Chriſtian moderation preſcribe,

ſcribe, is trained up to fill whatever meaſure of exceſs ſhall be dictated by pride, vanity, or faſhion. There are well-intentioned mothers who urge the neceſſity of taking pains to encourage in their daughters a certain degree of attachment to dreſs, of ſolicitude reſpecting the form and texture of their habiliments, leſt they ſhould afterwards degenerate into ſlatterns. It would perhaps be not leſs reaſonable ſtudiouſly to excite in boys a reliſh for the taſte of ſpirituous liquors, leſt in proceſs of time they ſhould impair their health by abſtemiouſneſs. An ancient philoſopher defined woman to be "an animal fond of "dreſs." And the additional experience of two thouſand years does not appear greatly to have invalidated his concluſion. It ſhould ſeem, therefore, that with reſpect to this point, parental anxiety might repoſe its confidence on the unaſſiſted energies of Nature. But further; there is no rule of conduct in principle more objectionable, no method of proceeding in practice more unwiſe, than to guard againſt one evil by

encouraging its oppoſite. The eagerneſs of man, ever deſirous to obtain its end, or a part of its end, in the quickeſt manner, and aware how far the rapid influence of the paſſions outſtrips the laborious operations of argument, is at all times, and on every ſubject, prone to combat error by rouſing and cheriſhing emotions which lead to the contrary extreme. But the reſult of this mode of attack, whether it be directed againſt falſe opinions which infeſt religion and politics, or againſt thoſe which prevail in the humbler concerns of private life, is always to be dreaded. Either the mind is confirmed in its errors by perceiving the weakneſs of the means employed to expel them; or, yielding blindly to the new impreſſion, abandons its original miſconceptions only to become a prey to oppoſite illuſions. Whatever be the enemy to be ſubdued, let him be aſſailed with juſtifiable weapons. Whatever be the poiſon imbibed, let it be encountered with its ſpecific antidote. The danger which you fear, is it that your daughter may

may prove a ſlattern? Impreſs her with the advantages, the duty of neatneſs: train her in correſponding habits: teach her by precept, and, whenever occaſion offers itſelf, by example, the diſguſting effects of deviating from them. Attach her thus to the proprieties without tempting her to the vanities of dreſs; ſecure the decencies of her perſon without enſnaring her mind.

Beauty is a poſſeſſion ſo grateful to every woman, and yet ſo productive of hazards and temptations, that if a young perſon is thrown into life with her original wiſhes and opinions on that ſubject uncorrected, her inſtructors will have been negligent of their charge in a very important point. To remind her from time to time of the tranſitory and precarious duration of perſonal attractions; to remind her, that elegance of form and brilliancy of complexion are beſtowed without regard to intrinſic excellence in the poſſeſſor; to teach her, that they who are admired chiefly on thoſe accounts

accounts are either unworthy of being valued for better reaſons, or are admired only by perſons whoſe approbation is no praiſe; that good ſenſe and virtue are the only qualifications which enſure or deſerve laſting eſteem; and that a countenance, lighted up with intelligence and the virtuous feelings of the heart, will kindle emotions which mere regularity of features could never have excited: this is not the language of auſterity and moroſeneſs, but of truth, of prudence, and of Chriſtian duty.

Pre-eminence in rank is likewiſe a topic which calls for eſpecial admonitions even in the ſeaſon of youth. Let the pupil, who finds herſelf in this reſpect elevated above her companions, be led clearly to apprehend, and practically to remember, that the diſtinctions of rank in ſociety are inſtituted not for the advantage or gratification of any individual, but for the benefit of the whole. Let her be taught that ſuperiority, conſidered with a reference

ence to the individual who is in poſſeſſion of it, is accompanied with proportionate duties and temptations; that to poſſeſs it implies no merit, to be without it no unworthineſs; and that the only important diſtinctions are thoſe which involve excellence of character and forebode permanent effects, the diſtinctions of vice and virtue.

Among children aſſembled in large bodies at ſeminaries of education, many are found who regulate their deportment to their ſchool-fellows, partly according to the degrees of wealth, but eſpecially of gentility, which they conceive to belong to their reſpective families. When the parent or relation of any of the ſcholars drives up to the door, they crowd into the windows with other emotions beſides that of ſimple curioſity; and, as the equipage is more or leſs ſhewy than that in which their own friends are wont to make their appearance, envy or exult. They pry, by ingenious interrogatories, into the internal proceed-

proceedings of each other's home; and triumph or repine according to the anſwers which they receive concerning the number of ſervants kept in the houſe, the magnificence of their liveries, the number of courſes habitually ſerved up at table, the number of aſſemblies and balls given at the town reſidence in winter, the extent of the gardens and of the park at the family manſion in the country, the intercourſe maintained with nobility and people of faſhion, and the connection ſubſiſting with the ſordid occupations and degrading profits of trade. When daughters are educated at home, the ſame paſſions reveal themſelves; but being encountered by the ſuperior attention which may there be paid to a girl's diſpoſitions, and wanting the encouragement which they would have derived in the ſchool from example and from the exerciſe afforded to them by a continual ſupply of freſh materials to work upon, they are more eaſily ſubdued. Both in public and in private education let them meet with that vigilant and determined oppoſition, without which

they will enſlave the heart, and render the character a deteſtable compound of haughtineſs, malevolence, and inſenſibility.

In treating of Education, I have not yet adverted to the care of health. In the caſe of children who do not labour under any particular weakneſs of frame, the concern which education has with health conſiſts not ſo much in poſitive endeavours to promote, as in cautiouſly forbearing to injure it; not ſo much in deviſing means to aſſiſt Nature in eſtabliſhing a ſtrong conſtitution, as in ſecuring full ſcope for the benefit of her ſpontaneous exertions. Debility and diſeaſe require peculiar attentions. And univerſally, the plan of inſtruction ought to be ſo arranged as not to claſh with the acquiſition or the preſervation of a bleſſing which, whether comfort or utility be conſidered, claims a place among the foremoſt attainable on earth. So intimate is the connection, ſo general the ſympathy, between the body and the mind, that the vigour of the former ſeems not only to remove obſta-

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cles to the operations of the latter, but even to communicate to its powers an acceſſion of ſtrength. Wholeſome food, early hours, pure air, and bodily exerciſe, are inſtruments not of health only, but of knowledge. Of theſe four indiſpenſable requiſites in every place and mode of education, the two firſt are ſeldom overlooked; in ſchools the two which remain frequently do not awaken the ſolicitude which they deſerve. Is pure air to be found in the heated atmoſphere of low and crowded rooms? Is it exerciſe to pace once in a day in proceſſion down a ſtreet or round a ſquare; or in regular arrangement to follow a teacher along the middle walk of a garden, forbidden to deviate to the right hand or to the left? Pale cheeks, a languid aſpect, and a feeble frame, anſwer the queſtion; and prognoſticate the long train of nervous maladies, which lie in wait for future years. It is not neceſſary that girls ſhould contend in the hardy amuſements, which befit the youth of the other ſex. But if you wiſh that they ſhould poſſeſs, when

when women, a healthful conſtitution, ſteady ſpirits, and a ſtrong and alert mind; let active exerciſe in the open air be one of their daily recreations, one of their daily duties (z).

(z) For the purpoſe of encouraging a propenſity to ſalubrious exerciſe in the open air, it ſeems deſirable that girls ſhould be allowed, when educated at home, and if poſſible, when placed in ſchools, to poſſeſs little gardens of their own, and to amuſe themſelves in them with the lighter offices of cultivation. The healthineſs of the employment would amply compenſate for a few daggled frocks and dirtied gloves. Beſides, an early reliſh for domeſtic amuſements lays the foundation of a domeſtic character. The remembrance of delights experienced in childhood diſpoſes the mind in riper years to purſuits akin to thoſe, from which the recollected pleaſures were derived.

CHAP. V.

ON THE MODE OF INTRODUCING YOUNG WOMEN INTO GENERAL SOCIETY.

WHEN the buſineſs of education, whether conducted at home or at a public ſeminary, draws towards a concluſion, the next object that occupies the attention of the parent is what ſhe terms the introduction of her daughter into the world. Emancipated from the ſhackles of inſtruction, the young woman is now to be brought forward to act her part on the public ſtage of life. And as though liberty were a gift unattended with temptations to inexperienced youth; as though vivacity, openneſs of heart, the conſciouſneſs of perſonal accompliſhments and of perſonal beauty, would ſerve rather to counteract than to aggravate thoſe temptations; the change of ſituation is not unfrequently heightened by every poſſible

poſſible aid of contraſt. Pains are taken, as it were, to contrive, that when the dazzled ſtranger ſhall ſtep from the nurſery and the lecture-room, ſhe ſhall plunge at once into a flood of vanity and diſſipation. Mewed up from every prying gaze, taught to believe that her firſt appearance is the ſubject of univerſal expectation, tutored to beware above all things of tarniſhing the luſtre of her attractions by *mauvaiſe honte*, ſtimulated with deſire to outſhine her equals in age and rank, ſhe burns with impatience for the hour of diſplaying her perfections: till at length, intoxicated beforehand with anticipated flatteries, ſhe is launched, in the pride of ornament, on ſome occaſion of feſtivity; and from that time forward thinks by day and dreams by night of amuſements, and of dreſs, and of compliments, and of admirers.

I believe this picture to convey no exaggerated repreſentation of the ſtate of things, which is often witneſſed in the higher ranks of ſociety. I fear, too, that it is a picture

to which the practice of the middle ranks, though at preſent not fully correſponding, bears a continually increaſing reſemblance. The extreme, however, which has been deſcribed, has, like every other extreme, its oppoſite. There are mothers who profeſs to initiate their daughters, almoſt from the cradle, into what they call the knowledge of life; and pollute the years of childhood with an inſtilled attachment to the card-table; with habits of flippancy and pertneſs, denominated wit; with an "eaſineſs" of manners, which ought to be named effrontery; and with a knowledge of tales of ſcandal unfit to be mentioned by any one but in a court of juſtice. Both theſe extremes are moſt dangerous to every thing that is valuable in the female character; to every thing on which happineſs in the preſent world and in a future world depends. But of the two the latter is the more pernicious. In that ſyſtem war is carried on almoſt from infancy, and carried on in the moſt deteſtable manner, againſt female delicacy and innocence. In the former, that delicacy

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and that innocence are expoſed under the greateſt diſadvantages to the ſudden influence of highly faſcinating allurements. It may be hoped however, that, coming to the encounter as yet little impaired, they may have ſome chance of eſcaping without ſevere injury. At any rate, be this chance ever ſo ſmall, it is greater than the probability, that when aſſailed from their earlieſt dawn by ſlow poiſon inceſſantly adminiſtered, they ſhould ultimately ſurvive.

To accuſtom the mind by degrees to the trials which it muſt learn to withſtand, yet to ſhelter it from inſidious temptations, while it is unable to diſcern and to ſhun the ſnare, is the firſt rule which wiſdom ſuggeſts with regard to all trials and temptations whatever. To this rule too much attention cannot be paid in the mode of introducing a young woman into the common habits of ſocial intercourſe. Let her not be diſtracted in the years by nature particularly deſigned for the cultivation of the underſtanding and the acquiſition of know-

ledge, by the turbulence and glare of polite amuſements. Let her not be ſuffered to taſte the draught which the world offers to her, until ſhe has learned that, if there be ſweetneſs on the ſurface, there is venom deeper in the cup; until ſhe has acquired a right judgement and a well-directed taſte as to the purſuits and pleaſures of life, or, according to the expreſſion of the Apoſtle, has become diſpoſed "to approve the things which are excellent;" and is fortified with thoſe principles of temperance and rectitude, which may guard her againſt unſafe indulgence. Let vanity, and other unwarrantable ſprings of action, prompt, at all times, to exert their influence on the female character, and at no time likely to exert an influence more dangerous than when a young woman firſt ſteps into public life, be curtailed, as far as may be ſafely practicable, of the powerful aſſiſtance of novelty. Altogether to preclude that aſſiſtance is impoſſible. But it may be diſarmed of much of its force by gradual familiarity. Let that gradual familiarity take

place

place under the ſuperintendence of parents and near relations, and of friends of approved ſobriety and diſcretion. Let not the young woman be conſigned to ſome faſhionable inſtructreſs, who, profeſſing at once to add the laſt poliſh to education, and to introduce the pupil into the beſt company, will probably diſmiſs her thirſting for admiration; inflamed with ambition; devoted to dreſs and amuſements; initiated in the ſcience and the habit of gaming; and prepared to deem every thing right and indiſpenſable, which is or ſhall be recommended by modiſh example. Let her not be abandoned in her outſet in life to the giddineſs and miſtaken kindneſs of faſhionable acquaintance in the metropolis; nor forwarded under their convoy to public places, there to be whirled, far from maternal care and admonition, in the circles of levity and folly, into which, even had maternal care and admonition been at hand to protect her, ſhe ought not to have been permitted to ſtep. At this very important ſeaſon, while the mother ſelects with cautious diſcrimination, and limits within narrow bounds both as

to time and expence, the ſcenes of public reſort and entertainment, to which her youthful charge is now to be ſuffered to have acceſs; let her cultivate in the mind of the latter with augmented ſolicitude thoſe principles, diſpoſitions, and habits, which may lead her not only cheerfully to acquieſce in the courſe adopted, but even ſpontaneouſly and decidedly to prefer it to a ſyſtem of leſs guarded indulgence. Let a double ſhare of attention be exerted to preſerve and ſtrengthen in her breaſt a ſenſe of the frailty of human nature; of the neceſſity of conſtantly looking up to divine ſupport; of the tranſitory and inconſiderable worth of temporal things compared with eternity; of the ſuperiority of the peaceful and heartfelt joys, which flow from the diſcharge of duty and the animating hopes of the favour of God, over every other gratification. All theſe principles are menaced, when freſh inlets of enſnaring pleaſures are opened. Let parental vigilance and love gently point out to the daughter, on every convenient occaſion, what is proper or improper in the conduct

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of the perſons of her own age, with whom ſhe is in any degree converſant, and alſo the grounds of the approbation or diſapprobation expreſſed. Let parental counſel and authority be prudently exerciſed in regulating the choice of her aſſociates. And at the ſame time that ſhe is habituated to regard diſtinctions of wealth and rank, as circumſtances wholly unconnected with perſonal worth; let her companions be in general neither much above her own level, nor much below it: leſt ſhe ſhould be led to ape the opinions, the expenſiveneſs, and the faſhionable follies of perſons in a ſtation higher than her own; or, in her intercourſe with thoſe of humbler condition, to aſſume airs of contemptuous and domineering ſuperiority. Solicitude on the part of parents, to conſult the welfare of their child in theſe points, will probably be attended with a further conſequence of no ſmall benefit to themſelves; when it perſuades them to an encreaſed degree of circumſpection as to the viſitors whom they encourage at home, and the ſociety which they frequent abroad.

CHAP. VI.

ON FEMALE CONVERSATION AND EPISTOLARY CORRESPONDENCE.

CONVERSATION is an index to the mind. "Out of the abundance of the heart the "mouth ſpeaketh (*a*)." The obſervation is true, not only when referring to thoſe who uſe the language of openneſs and ſincerity, but alſo when applied to the reſerved man and the diſſembler. Cloſeneſs indicates diſtruſt; and often, by ſharpening curioſity, cauſes the diſcovery of what is meant to be concealed. Art ſooner or later drops the maſk, or gives ample proof that ſhe wears one. If it be admitted, conformably to general opinion, that female fluency in diſcourſe is greater and more perſevering than that of the other ſex; it behoves women the more ſteadily to remember, that the foun-

(*a*) Matt. c. xii. v. 34.

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tain will be eſtimated according to the ſtream. If the rill run babbling along, ſhallow and frothy, the ſource will be deemed incapable of ſupplying a profound and tranquil current. If the former be muddy, bitter, and corroſive, its offenſiveneſs will be aſcribed to the inherent qualities of the latter.

Among the faults which it is uſual to hear laid to the charge of young women, when female diſcourſe is canvaſſed, vanity, affectation, and frivolouſneſs, ſeem to furniſh the moſt prevailing theme of cenſure. That in a great number of inſtances the cenſure is warranted, cannot be denied. And every young woman ought to beware, leſt there ſhould be ground for applying it, with juſtice, to herſelf. For, if it ſhould be with juſtice applied to her, let her be aſſured, that whatever may be the circumſtances of palliation by which a part of the blame may be transferred elſewhere; there will yet be, in the moſt favourable caſe, a large reſiduum, for which ſhe ought to be, and muſt be, perſonally reſponſible. But it is no more

more than common candour to avow, that in addition to thoſe defects which frequently ſubſiſt in the plan of female education, there is another cauſe to which a portion of this vanity, and of its concomitant habits and errors, muſt be aſcribed; namely, the injudicious and reprehenſible behaviour of the other ſex.

The ſtyle and kind of converſation in which men very generally indulge themſelves towards unmarried women, not unfrequently towards married women, and towards no women ſo much as towards thoſe who have been recently introduced into public, are ſuch as would lead an indifferent auditor to conclude, either that their own intellectual powers were very ſlender; or, that they regarded the perſons, to whom they were directing their diſcourſe, as nearly devoid of underſtanding. For, antecedently to experience, could it appear probable that a man of ſenſe, when converſing with a woman whom he deemed to poſſeſs a cultivated mind, would ſtudy, as it ſhould ſeem,

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to ſhun every ſubject of diſcourſe which might afford ſcope for the exerciſe of reaſon: that his whole aim would apparently be, to excite noiſy gaiety founded on nothing; to call forth a conteſt of puny witticiſm and flippant repartee; to diſcuſs the merits of caps and colours, and eſſences and fans; and to intoxicate the head, and beguile the heart, by every mode and every extravagance of compliment? Yet ſuch is the ſort of converſation daily to be heard; and not in public places only, but in private families; and not only from the giddineſs of empty young men, but from men of maturer years, and of a more ſober caſt; men who, themſelves, have daughters about to be introduced into the world, and are themſelves known, in their ſerious moments, to lament, and to lament with ſincerity, the temptations and dangers by which thoſe daughters, when introduced, are to be aſſailed. The effects of ſuch treatment and intercourſe on young women are deeply and permanently miſchievous. She who is already vain, frivolous, and affected, inſtead

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of deriving from the behaviour which ſhe experiences from the other ſex motives and encouragements to improvement, is confirmed in her faults more and more; and learns to continue from principle what, perhaps, originated in thoughtleſſneſs. And ſhe who at preſent is not tinctured with theſe failings, is in conſtant hazard either of being enſnared by the familiarity of example, and by the comparative diſregard ſhewn to thoſe excellences with which ſhe is endowed; or of contracting a diſpoſition equally remote from feminine diffidence and Chriſtian humility, namely, a propenſity to admire her own acquiſitions; to reſt with proud confidence in her own judgement of perſons and things; and to reprehend with cenſorioufneſs, or expoſe with ſarcaſtic ridicule, the manners and the characters of her acquaintance. Young women will act wiſely in remembering that men who are addicted to this ſtyle of converſation, and profuſe in the language of complimentary encomium, are found in general to be indiſcriminate flatterers, and to applaud without

out inward approbation: and that, if ſingle men, they are often among the leaſt likely to have their affections ſeriouſly engaged, and the leaſt worthy to poſſeſs the affections of another.

But while, on the one hand, we allow to young women the full benefit of every apology that can be derived from the improper behaviour and example of the other ſex in the points under conſideration; truth requires us, on the other hand, to obſerve that this very behaviour on the part of men, which has been juſtly reprehended, is frequently called forth and encouraged by the favourable reception which it is ſeen to attain. Beauty delights to hear its own praiſe. Where beauty does not captivate in the countenance, grace and elegance may faſcinate in the perſon: and grace and elegance do not yield to beauty in the deſire of admiration. Where neither beauty, nor grace and elegance have been liberal of their gifts, vanity is at hand to magnify every the moſt ſlender token of their boun-

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ty; and liſtens with open ears to the applauſes which ſhe imagines herſelf to deſerve; and with ſtill greater eagerneſs to thoſe, her title to which ſhe had previouſly doubted. If perſonal attractions have been ſo ſparingly beſtowed, as neither to leave room for the expectation of ſincere encomium, nor even for the deluſive dreams of hope, in which the fancy is prone to indulge; the love of compliment has yet other ſources of gratification. Shewy accompliſhments become the ground on which the tribute of panegyric is claimed: and the tribute, once evidently claimed, will be regularly paid by conviction or by politeneſs. Hence it is that among a large proportion of young women, and eſpecially among thoſe who are not remarkable for the ſtrength of their underſtanding, and who have not been accuſtomed to eſtimate the worth of objects according to the ſtandard of reaſon and religion, converſation loaded with flatteries, as ſilly as they are groſs, too often finds welcome hearers. Hence, alſo, it is confined in circles of this deſcription to

ſcenes, topics, and incidents which embrace little more than the amuſements of the preceding or of the enſuing afternoon; the looks and the dreſs of the preſent company or of their acquaintance; petty anecdotes of the neighbourhood, and local ſcandal. Is it wonderful then that the wiſh prevalent in moſt men, and eſpecially in young men, to render themſelves acceptable in ſocial intercourſe to the female ſex, ſhould betray them into a mode of behaviour which they perceive to be ſo generally welcome? Is it wonderful that he, who diſcovers trifling to be the way to pleaſe, ſhould become a trifler; that he who by the caſual introduction of a ſubject, which ſeemed to call upon the reaſon to exert itſelf, has brought an ominous yawn over the countenance of his fair auditor, ſhould guard againſt a repetition of the offence? But it is not only to women of moderate capacity, that hours of trifling and flippant converſation are found acceptable. To thoſe of ſuperior talents they are not unfrequently known to give a degree of entertainment, greater than on

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ſlight conſideration we might have expected. The matter, however, may eaſily be explained. Some women who are endowed with ſtrong mental powers, are little inclined to the trouble of exerting them. They love to indulge a ſupine vacuity of thought; liſten to nonſenſe without diſſatisfaction, becauſe to liſten to it requires no effort; neither ſearch nor prompt others to ſearch deeper than the ſurface of the paſſing topic of diſcourſe; and were it not for an occaſional remark that indicates diſcernment, or a look of intelligence which gleams through the liſtleſſneſs of ſloth, would ſcarcely be ſuſpected of judgement and penetration. While theſe perſons rarely ſeem in the common intercourſe of life to turn their abilities to the advantage either of themſelves or of their friends; others, gifted with equal talents, are tempted to miſapply them by the conſciouſneſs of poſſeſſing them. Vain of their powers and of their dexterity in the uſe of them, they cannot reſiſt the impulſe which they feel to lead a pert and coxcombical young man, whenever

whenever he falls in their way, to expoſe himſelf. The prattle which they deſpiſe, they encourage; becauſe it amuſes them by rendering the ſpeaker ridiculous. They lead him on, unſuſpicious of their deſign, and ſecretly pluming himſelf on the notice which he attracts, and on his own happy talents of rendering himſelf agreeable, and delighted the moſt when he is moſt the object of deriſion, from one ſtep of folly to another. By degrees they contract an habitual reliſh for the ſtyle of converſation, which enables them at once to diſplay their own wit, and to gratify their paſſion for mirth, and their taſte for the ludicrous. They become inwardly impatient when it flags; and more impatient when it meets with interruption. And if a man of grave aſpect and more wakeful reflection preſumes to ſtep within the circle, they aſſail the unwelcome intruder with a volley of brilliant raillery and ſparkling repartee, which bears down knowledge and learning before it; and convulſe the delighted auditors with peals of laughter, while he labours in his heavy

accoutrements after his light-armed antagoniſt, and receives at every turn a ſhower of arrows, which he can neither parry nor withſtand.

From the remarks which have been made on the frivolouſneſs of language and ſentiment which often appears agreeable to women; and even to women who are qualified both to communicate and to enjoy the higheſt pleaſures of converſation which can flow from cultivated minds; let it not be inferred, that the mixed diſcourſe either of female ſociety, or of young perſons of the two ſexes, is to reſemble the diſcuſſions of a board of philoſophers; and that eaſe and gaiety, and laughter and wit, are to be proſcribed as inveterate enemies of ſobriety and good ſenſe. Let eaſe exempt from affectation, gaiety prompted by innocence, laughter the effuſion of ingenuous delight, and wit unſtained with any tincture of malevolence, enliven the hours of ſocial converſe. But let it not be thought that their enlivening influence is unreaſonably curtailed, if

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good ſenſe be empowered at all times to ſuperintend their proceedings; and if ſobriety be authoriſed ſometimes to interpoſe topics, which may exerciſe and improve the faculties of the underſtanding.

The true ſources of uſeful and pleaſing converſation, whether in men or in women, (and let it be remembered that no converſation can be truly pleaſing that is not accompanied by ſimplicity of manner,) are virtuous diſpoſitions, right judgement, and poliſhed taſte. I mention them in the order in which they appear to be requiſite. Perſons of either ſex, who ambitiouſly endeavour to ſupply by artificial props, or to compenſate by artificial ornaments, the want of any of theſe ſolid foundations of improving and attractive diſcourſe, may for a time amuſe the indolent, or may catch the applauſe of ignorance and folly. But they will not long render themſelves acceptable, even in mixed company, to conſiderate obſervers. And they will altogether fail in the far more important office of diffuſing

improvement, of communicating pleaſure, and of gaining friendſhip and affection, in the ſociety of private life.

At the cloſe of theſe remarks on female converſation, it may be allowable to ſubjoin a few words on a kindred ſubject, epiſtolary correſpondence. Letters which paſs between men commonly relate, in a greater or a leſs degree, to actual buſineſs. Even young men, on whom the cares of life are not yet devolved in their full weight, will frequently be led to enlarge to their abſent friends on topics not only of an intereſting nature, but alſo of a ſerious caſt: on the ſtudies which they are reſpectively purſuing; on the advantages and diſadvantages of the profeſſion to which the one or the other is deſtined; on the circumſtances which appear likely to forward or to impede the ſucceſs of each in the world. The ſerioufneſs of the ſubject, therefore, has a tendency, though a tendency which, I admit, is not always ſucceſsful, to guard the writer from an affected and artificial ſtyle.

ſtyle. Young women, whoſe minds are comparatively unoccupied by ſuch concerns, are ſometimes found to want in their correſpondence, a counterpoiſe, if not to the deſire of ſhining, yet to the quickneſs of imagination, and, occaſionally, to the quickneſs of feeling, natural to their ſex. Hence they are expoſed to peculiar danger, a danger aggravated ſometimes by familiarity with novels and theatrical productions, ſometimes by the nature of the faſhionable topics which will proceed from engroſſing converſation to employ the pen, of learning to clothe their thoughts in ſtudied phraſes; and even of loſing ſimplicity both of thought and expreſſion in florid, refined, and ſentimental parade. Frequently, too, the deſire of ſhining intermingles itſelf, and involves them in additional temptations. They are ambitious to be diſtinguiſhed for writing, as the phraſe is, *good* letters. Not that a lady ought not to write a good letter. But a lady, who makes it her ſtudy to write a good letter, commonly produces a compoſition to which a very different epi-

thet ought to be applied. Thoſe letters only are good, which contain the natural effuſions of the heart, expreſſed in unaffected language. Tinſel and glitter, and laboured phraſes, diſmiſs the friend and introduce the authoreſs. From the uſe of ſtrained and hyperbolical language, it is but a ſtep to advance to that which is inſincere. But though that ſtep be not taken, all that is pleaſing in letter-writing is already loſt. And a far heavier loſs is to be dreaded, the loſs of ſimplicity of manners and character in other points. For when a woman is habitually betrayed into an artificial mode of proceeding by vanity, by the deſire of pleaſing, by erroneous judgement, or by any other cauſe; can it be improbable that the ſame cauſe ſhould extend its influence to other parts of her conduct, and be productive of ſimilar effects? In juſtice to the female ſex, however, it ought to be added, that when amiable women, and eſpecially amiable women of improved underſtandings, write with ſimplicity, and employ their pens in a more rational

rational way than retailing the ſhapes of head-dreſſes and gowns, and thus, however without intention, encouraging each other in vanity, their letters are in many reſpects particularly pleaſing. Being unencumbered with grave diſquiſitions, they poſſeſs a peculiar eaſe; diſcloſe in the moſt engaging manner the beſt affections of the human heart; and ſhew with ſingular clearneſs the delicate features and ſhades, which diſtinguiſh the mind of the writer.

CHAP. VII.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS ON PROPENSITY TO IMITATION.—ON DRESS.

THE remarks on the mode of introducing young perſons of the female ſex into public, which were ſtated in a former chapter, were calculated primarily for the conſideration of mothers, and of perſons who have to ſupply the place of mothers. The preſent and the two ſucceeding chapters are addreſſed to the daughter no leſs than to her elder relations.

At the age when young women are introduced into general ſociety, the character, even of thoſe who have been the beſt inſtructed, is in a conſiderable degree unfixed. The full force of temptation, as yet known only by report, is now to be learned from hazardous experience. Right principles, approved

approved in theory, are to be reduced from ſpeculation into practice. Modes of conduct, wiſely choſen and well begun, are to be confirmed by the influence of habit. New ſcenes are to be witneſſed; new opinions to be heard; new examples to be obſerved; new dangers to be encountered. The reſult of a very few years at this ſeaſon of life in almoſt every caſe powerfully affects, and in many caſes unequivocally decides, the tenor of its future courſe. Unfortunate are thoſe individuals who, at this critical period, being deſtitute of the counſel of judicious friends, or too giddy to give it a patient hearing, or too opinionated to receive it with kindneſs, advance unaided to the trial; and are left blindly to imbibe the maxims, and imitate the proceedings, of the thoughtleſs multitude around them.

As erroneous opinions and reprehenſible proceedings with reſpect to Dreſs and Amuſements are frequently occaſioned, or in a very high degree aggravated, by the habit of imitation; ſome prefatory remarks

remarks on that ſubject may not be devoid of utility.

A propenſity to imitation is natural to the human mind, and is attended with various effects highly favourable to human happineſs. To childhood it is a perpetual ſource of knowledge, gained without labour and without reluctance. In riper years it continues to inſtruct. It produces ſuch a degree of conformity between the manners and conduct of different individuals, as maintains the harmony of ſociety, notwithſtanding the claſhing purſuits and pretenſions which agitate the world. It contributes, in ſubordination to higher principles, to conciliate thoſe, who have experienced a ſudden elevation or depreſſion of fortune, to the habits of their new condition, and to open their eyes to its comforts. This propenſity ſhews itſelf with eſpecial ſtrength in the female ſex. Providence, deſigning from the beginning that the manner of life to be adopted by women ſhould in many reſpects ultimately

timately depend, not ſo much on their own deliberate choice, as on the determination, or at leaſt on the intereſt and convenience, of the parent, of the huſband, or of ſome other near connection; has implanted in them a remarkable tendency to conform to the wiſhes and example of thoſe for whom they feel a warmth of regard, and even of all thoſe with whom they are in familiar habits of intercourſe. In youth, when the feelings of the heart are the moſt lively, and eſtabliſhed modes of proceeding are not yet formed, this principle is far more powerful than in the more advanced periods of life. As the mind, in obeying the impulſe of this principle, no leſs than in following any other of its native or acquired tendencies, is capable of being enſnared into errors and exceſſes; the ſeaſon of youth, the ſeaſon when the principle itſelf is in its greateſt ſtrength, and when it has yet derived few leſſons from reflection and experience, is the time when error and exceſs are moſt to be apprehended. In youth, too, when the love of admiration

and the dread of ſhame are unimpaired, there are few ſubjects and occaſions ſo likely to produce error and exceſs, as thoſe in which cloſeneſs of imitation is deemed the road to reſpect and applauſe; and even ſmall degrees of ſingularity are ſuppoſed to entail conſiderable diſgrace. Let theſe circumſtances be duly recollected, and we ſhall not greatly wonder that women in general, and eſpecially very young women, feel an extreme repugnance to fall ſhort of their neighbours in compliance with every faſhion of the day not palpably criminal. And we ſhall be leſs aſtoniſhed than concerned, that ſo many are led with open eyes by the attraction of prevailing cuſtom, indiſcriminately to copy the pattern ſet before them by their equals and their ſuperiors; and after following the crowd through unceaſing fluctuations of vanity, of folly, of pride, and of extravagance, to attend it, to ſay the leaſt, to the confines even of more flagrant vice.

But circumſtances, which may not excite wonder, are not the leſs on that account

to

to be lamented. Error and miſconduct are not to be guarded againſt the leſs, becauſe, from the weakneſs of human nature, and the force of temptation, they may be likely to occur. The known probability of an undeſirable event is an additional reaſon for vigilance and circumſpection. If life be a ſtate of trial, the more eaſily a young woman may be betrayed into a fault, the more ought ſhe to be fortified againſt it by friendly admonition. I dwell the longer on theſe very obvious truths, becauſe perſons of worth and underſtanding appear ſometimes to give currency to a miſtaken and pernicious opinion, that follies and failings *natural*, as the phraſe is, to certain periods of life, or to perſons in certain ſituations, are of no great moment. And though, if conſtrained by the incommodious perſeverance of ſome cloſe reaſoner to expreſs their ſentiments reſpecting any ſuch point of conduct, they mention it with a degree of blame, yet they paſs over the matter lightly, and ſeem not to think it neceſſary to give themſelves or others much trouble about it.

In

In things which in themſelves are indifferent, cuſtom is generally the proper guide: and obſtinately to reſiſt its authority, with reſpect to circumſtances of that deſcription, is commonly the mark either of weakneſs or of arrogance. The variations of dreſs, as in countries highly poliſhed frequent variations will exiſt, fall within its juriſdiction. And as long as the prevailing modes remain intrinſically indifferent; that is to ſay, as long as in their form they are not tinctured with indelicacy, nor in their coſtlineſs are inconſiſtent with the ſtation or the fortune of the wearer; ſuch a degree of conformity to them, as is ſufficient to preclude the appearance of particularity, is reaſonable and becoming. It is modeſtly to acquieſce in the deciſion of others, on a ſubject upon which they have at leaſt as good a title as ourſelves to decide, and upon which they have not decided amiſs. When other unobjectionable modes are generally eſtabliſhed, the ſame reaſoning indicates the propriety of acceding to them. But it neither ſuggeſts nor juſtifies the practice of adopting faſhions, which

which intrench either on the principles of decency, or on the rules of reaſonable frugality. Faſhions of the former kind are not unfrequently introduced by the ſhameleſs, of the latter by the profuſe; and both are copied by the vain and the inconſiderate. But deliberately to copy either, is to ſhew that delicacy, the chief grace of the female character; or that œconomy, the ſupport not merely of honeſty alone, but of generoſity, is deemed an object only of ſecondary importance. To copy either inadvertently, denotes a want of habitual livelineſs of attention to the native dictates of ſenſibility, or to the ſuggeſtions of equity and kindneſs. Among the modes of attire more or leſs inconſiſtent with feminine modeſty, thoſe which ape the garb of the other ſex are to be claſſed (*a*). Their unpleaſing

(*a*) From the account which Dr. Henry gives of Engliſh manners and cuſtoms at different periods, both ſexes among our anceſtors appear to have been as much attached to coſtlineſs, variety, and, I may add, abſurdity in dreſs, as their cotemporaries abroad, and each ſex commonly as much as the other. From the two following paſſages, however, in his

unpleaſing effect is heightened by additional circumſtances which very commonly attend them, and are deſigned perhaps to ſtrengthen the reſemblance; a maſculine air and deportment, and maſculine habits of addreſs and familiarity. To thoſe whom higher motives would not deter from exhibiting or following ſo prepoſterous an example, it may not be ineffectual to whiſper, that ſhe who conceives that to imitate the habiliments of perſons of the other ſex, is a probable method of captivating them, is not a

his Hiſtory, it may be inferred, that at one period, namely, in the reign of Henry the Eighth, the men exceeded the women in extravagance and fickleneſs. "The dreſs of the "period was coſtly, and in its faſhions ſubject to frequent "fluctuations: ſo coſtly, that the wardrobes of the nobility "in fifty years had increaſed to twenty times their former "value; ſo changeable, that the capricious inconſtancy of "the national dreſs was quaintly repreſented by the figure "of an Engliſhman, unclothed, in a muſing poſture, with "ſheers in his hand and cloth on his arm, perplexed amidſt "a multiplicity of faſhions, and uncertain how to deviſe his "garments." Vol. vi. p. 661. "The attire of females "was becoming and decent, ſimilar in its faſhion to their "preſent dreſs, but leſs ſubject to change and caprice." Ib. p. 663.

little

little unfortunate in her conjecture. Let her aſk herſelf, in what manner ſhe would be impreſſed by the appearance of a young man ſtudiouſly approaching in his dreſs to the model of her own; and ſhe will not be at a loſs to eſtimate the repulſive influence of her accoutrements on thoſe whom ſhe copies. Beauty, it is true, may remain attractive in the midſt of abſurd and uncouth decorations. It is attractive, however, not in conſequence of them, but in ſpite of them; and it attracts with force ſingularly diminiſhed by the medium through which it has choſen to operate. And thoſe men, who expect in women qualities more eſtimable than perſonal charms, are prone to draw unfavourable concluſions as to the underſtanding or the diſpoſitions of one, who proves herſelf ſo little attached to the proprieties natural to her ſex; and if they are betrayed by inadvertence into the language of compliment, can ſcarcely reſtrain emotions of diſguſt from riſing in their hearts.

Faſhions in dreſs, which in the two particulars already ſpecified are irreprehenſible, are yet ſometimes of ſuch a nature as to be extremely inconvenient to the wearer. Modes of this deſcription are ſeldom likely to be very long prevalent. But, while they continue, every practicable diſcouragement ſhould be pointed againſt them.

In the next place, it is to be obſerved, that the principles, which recommend ſuch a degree of compliance with eſtabliſhed faſhions of an unobjectionable nature as is ſufficient to prevent the appearance of particularity, cannot be alleged in defence of thoſe perſons, who are ſolicitous to purſue exiſting modes through their minute ramifications, or who ſeek to diſtinguiſh themſelves as the introducers of new modes. Fickleneſs, or vanity, or ambition, is the motive which encourages ſuch deſires: deſires which afford preſumptive evidence of weakneſs of underſtanding, though found occaſionally to actuate and degrade ſuperior minds.

minds. It happens, in the embelliſhment of the perſon, as in moſt other inſtances, that wayward caprice, and a paſſion for admiration, deviate into thoſe paths of folly which lead from the objects of purſuit.

——— We have run
Through every change that fancy, at the loom
Exhauſted, has had genius to ſupply;
And ſtudious of mutation ſtill, diſcard
A real elegance, a little uſed,
For monſtrous novelty, and ſtrange diſguiſe (*b*).

So prepoſterous and fantaſtic are the diſguiſes of the human form which modern faſhion has exhibited, that her votaries, when brought together in her public haunts, have ſometimes been found ſcarcely able to refrain from gazing with an eye of ridicule and contempt on each other. And while individually priding themſelves on their elegance and taſte, they have very commonly appeared in the eyes of an indifferent ſpectator to be running a race for the acquiſition of deformity.

It is a common and a juſt remark, that objects in their own nature innocent and

(*b*) Cowper's Taſk, Book 2d.

entitled to notice, may become the ſource of diſadvantage and of guilt, when, by being raiſed from the rank of trifles to ideal importance, they occupy a ſhare of time and attention which they do not deſerve; and when they are purſued with an immoderate ardour, which at once indiſpoſes the mind to occupations of higher concern, and clouds it with malignant emotions. There are few ſubjects, by a reference to which it is more eaſy to illuſtrate the obſervation; there are none to which it is more evidently neceſſary to apply it, than faſhions in attire, in equipage, in furniture, in the embelliſhments of the table, and in other ſimilar circumſtances. Thus, to ſpeak of the topic immediately under conſideration, if, in addition to that reaſonable degree of regard to the dreſs of the perſon which enſures the ſtricteſt neatneſs, and a modeſt conformity in unobjectionable points to the authority of cuſtom, a young woman permits her thoughts to be frequently engaged by the ſubject of exterior ornaments; occupations of moment will be proportionably neglected. From the complacency natural to all human beings, when

when employed in contemplating objects by means of which the flattering hope of ſhining is preſented to them; ſhe will be in the moſt imminent danger of contracting a diſtaſte to ſerious reflection, and of being at length abſorbed in the deluſions of vanity and ſelf-love. It is undoubtedly a matter of indifference, whether a lady's ribbands be green or blue; whether her head be decorated with flowers or with feathers; whether her gown be compoſed of muſlin or of ſilk. But it is no matter of indifference, whether the time which ſhe devotes to the determination of one of theſe points, is to be reckoned by hours or by minutes; nor whether, on diſcovering the elevation of her bonnet to be an inch higher or lower, and its tint a ſhade lighter or darker, than the model which prevails among her acquaintance, ſhe is overwhelmed with conſternation and diſappointment, or bears the calamity with the apathy of a ſtoic.

I have ventured in the preceding pages explicitly to inculcate the duty of refraining

from compliance with fashions in dress, which would be accompanied with a degree of expence inconsistent with the present circumstances of the individual. Let not the admonition be conceived as intended to countenance a niggardly disposition. To prevent the danger of contracting such a disposition, has been one of the principal reasons for offering the advice. Young women who accustom themselves to be lavish in matters of personal decoration, easily proceed to think, that as long as they restrain their expensiveness within the limits of the resources supplied by their parents and friends, they are chargeable with no blame on the subject. If they pay their bills punctually, who is entitled to find fault? Those persons will discern just cause of reprehension, who do not consider the honest payment of bills at the customary times as comprising the whole of human duty with regard to the expenditure of money. The demands of justice may be silenced: but has benevolence no claims to be satisfied? The fact is, that an unguarded fondness for or-

nament has been known, in a multitude of examples, to overpower the native tenderneſs of the female mind; and to prevent the growth and eſtabliſhment of diſpoſitions pronounced in the Goſpel to be indiſpenſably requiſite to the Chriſtian character. If the purſe be generally kept low by the demands of milliners, of mantua-makers, of jewellers, and of others who bear their part in adorning the perſon; little can be allotted to the applications of charity. But charity requires, in common with other virtues, the foſtering influence of habit. If the cuſtom of devoting an adequate portion of the income to the relief of diſtreſs be long intermitted, the deſire of giving relief will gradually be impaired. The heart forgets, by diſuſe, the emotions in which it once delighted. The ear turns from ſolicitations now become unwelcome. In proportion as the wants and the griefs of others are diſregarded, the ſpirit of ſelfiſhneſs ſtrikes deeper and ſtronger roots in the breaſt. Let the generous exertions of kindneſs be

tempered with diſcretion: but let a diſpoſition to thoſe exertions be encouraged on principles of duty; and confirmed, in proportion to the ability of the individual, by frequency of practice. Before the world has repreſſed, by its intereſted leſſons, the warmth of youthful benevolence, let experience eſtabliſh a conviction, that the greateſt of all pleaſures is to do good. She who has accuſtomed herſelf to this delight, will not eaſily be induced to forego it. She will feel, that whatever ſhe is able, without penurioufneſs or improper ſingularity, to withdraw from the expence of perſonal ornament, is not only reſerved for much higher purpoſes, but for purpoſes productive of exquiſite and permanent gratification.

Another, and a very important benefit which reſults from fixed habits of moderation as to dreſs, and all points of a ſimilar nature, will be clearly diſcerned by adverting to the irreparable evils into which young women are ſometimes plunged by the

the contrary practice. The laviſh indulgence in which they have learned to ſeek for happineſs, becoming, in their eſtimation, eſſential to their comfort, will bias their conduct in every important ſtep. Hence, in forming matrimonial connections, it exerciſes perhaps a ſecret, but a very powerful influence. The proſpect of wealth and magnificence, of the continuance and of the increaſe of pleaſures ſuppoſed to flow from the pomp of dreſs and equipage, from ſumptuous manſions, ſhewy furniture, and numerous attendants, dazzles the judgement; impoſes on the affections; conceals many defects in moral character, and compenſates for others. It frequently proves the deciſive circumſtance which leads the deluded victim to the altar, there to conſign herſelf to ſplendid miſery for life.

There are yet other conſequences which attend an immoderate paſſion for the embelliſhments of dreſs. When the mind is fixed upon objects which derive their chief value from the food which they adminiſter

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to vanity and the love of admiration; the averſion, which almoſt every individual of either ſex is prone to feel towards a rival, is particularly called forth. And when objects attainable ſo eaſily as exterior ornaments occupy the heart, there will be rivals without number. Hence it is not very unuſual to ſee neighbouring young women engaged in a conſtant ſtate of petty warfare with each other. To vie in oſtentatiouſneſs and in coſtlineſs of apparel; to be diſtinguiſhed by novel inventions in the ſcience of decoration; to gain the earlieſt intelligence reſpecting changes of faſhion in the metropolis; to detect, in the attire of a luckleſs competitor, traces of a mode which for ſix weeks has been obſolete in high life; theſe frequently are the points of excellence to which the force of female genius is directed. In the mean time, while the maſk of friendſhip is worn on the countenance, and the language of regard dwells on the tongue, indifference, diſguſt, and envy, are gradually taking poſſeſſion of the breaſt; until, at length,

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the unworthy conteſt, prolonged for years under confirmed habits of diſſimulation, by which none of the parties are deceived, terminates in the violence of an open rupture.

The Scriptures have ſpoken too plainly reſpecting unreaſonable ſolicitude about dreſs, to permit me to quit the ſubject without referring to their authority. Our Saviour, in one of his moſt ſolemn diſcourſes, warns his followers againſt anxiety "wherewithal they ſhould be "clothed," in a manner particularly emphatical, by claſſing that anxiety with the deſpicable purſuits of thoſe who are ſtudious "what they ſhall eat, and what they ſhall drink;" and by pronouncing all ſuch cares to be among the characteriſtical features, by which the heathens were diſtinguiſhed and diſgraced (*c*). It ought to be obſerved, that theſe admonitions of Chriſt reſpect men no leſs than women. St. Paul, in the following paſſage, ſpeaks pointedly

(*c*) Matth. vi. 31, 32.

concerning

concerning female dreſs: "I will, in like "manner alſo, that women adorn them- "ſelves in modeſt apparel, with ſhame- "facedneſs and ſobriety: not with broi- "dered hair, or gold, or pearls, or coſtly "array; but, which becometh women pro- "feſſing godlineſs, with good works (*d*)." In another paſſage, which remains to be produced from the New Teſtament, St. Peter alſo ſpeaks expreſsly of the female ſex; and primarily of married women, but in terms applicable with equal propriety to the ſingle: "Whoſe adorning, let it not be "that outward adorning of plaiting the "hair and of wearing of gold, and of "putting on of apparel. But let it be the "hidden man of the heart," (the inward frame and diſpoſition of the mind,) "in "that which is not corruptible; even the "ornament of a meek and quiet ſpirit, "which is in the ſight of God of great "price (*e*)." It would be too much to aſſert, on the one hand, that it was the intention of either of the Apoſtles, in giv-

(*d*) 1 Tim. ii. 8, 10. (*e*) 1 Peter, iii. 3, 4.

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ing theſe directions, to proſcribe the uſe of the particular kinds of perſonal ornament which he ſpecifies. But on the other hand, it was unqueſtionably the deſign of both, to proſcribe whatever may juſtly be ſtyled ſolicitude reſpecting any kind of perſonal decoration; and to cenſure thoſe who, inſtead of reſting their claim to approbation ſolely on the tempers of the ſoul, ſhould ambitiouſly ſeek to be noticed and praiſed for exterior embelliſhments, as deviating preciſely in that degree from the ſimplicity and the purity of the Chriſtian character. Theſe obſervations may, by parity of reaſoning, be extended from the ſubject of dreſs to ſolicitude reſpecting equipage, and all other circumſtances in domeſtic œconomy, with which the idea of ſhewy appearance may be connected. They may be extended alſo to a thirſt for faſhionable talents and diſpoſitions, (for even in talents and diſpoſitions there is a faſhion,) and for modiſh accompliſhments, geſtures, phraſes, reading, and employments.

CHAP. VIII.

ON AMUSEMENTS IN GENERAL.—MASQUERADES.—THE EFFICACY OF INDIVIDUAL EXAMPLE CONSIDERED.

AMUSEMENTS, private as well as public, form another province over which cuſtom and faſhion are generally allowed to preſide. The claim is, under due limitations, not unreaſonable. But that propenſity to imitation in the female ſex, which has already been explained, concurs with the high ſpirits and inexperience of youth very often to lead women to venture, in this province, on ground that is manifeſtly inauſpicious, and ſometimes on ground which ought to be deemed abſolutely forbidden. In former ages, when the barbarous combats of gladiators were exhibited in the Roman Circus; and exhibited in ſo many cities and with ſuch frequency, as in ſome inſtances to cauſe from twenty

twenty to thirty thouſand lives to be ſacrificed in Europe by this abominable cruelty within the ſpace of a month; the wives and daughters of the citizens of all ranks are repreſented as having been paſſionately addicted to theſe ſpectacles (*f*). To our own countrywomen, whoſe eyes have not been polluted nor their hearts hardened by brutiſh and ſanguinary entertainments, this recital may ſcarcely appear credible. But the fact is confirmed by ſimilar examples. I mean not to dwell on the concurrent accounts, given by different writers, of the extreme delight which the women among the North American Indians experience, when vying with each other in embittering the tortures inflicted on the captive enemy: partly becauſe a large ſhare of the pleaſure is derived from the triumphant ſpirit of revenge; and partly becauſe parallels drawn from the untamed ferocity of ſavage life, cannot fairly be applied to illuſtrate the influence of cuſtom

(*f*) Lipſius, Sat. b. 1. c. 12.

on

on modern periods of refinement. But a fact, too nearly correſponding to that which has been alleged from the annals of Rome, was very recently to be witneſſed, I believe that it is even yet to be witneſſed, in one of the cultivated nations of the South of Europe. I allude to the Spaniſh Bull-feaſts. Perſons of credit, who have lately viſited Spain, unite in deſcribing the Spaniſh ladies as beyond meaſure fond of this barbarous ſpecies of entertainment (*g*); and as moſt

(*g*) See "Townſend's Journey through Spain, in the years 1786 and 1787," ſecond edition, vol. i. p. 342, &c. According to his ſtatement, the Bull-feaſts at Madrid are regularly held one day in every week, and often two days, throughout the ſummer. On each of theſe days ſix bulls are ſlaughtered in the morning, and twelve in the evening. Of the men who engage the furious animal, ſome maintain the combat on foot, ſome on horſeback. The ſanguinary nature and the danger of the employment may be eſtimated from two circumſtances, mentioned with another view by the author whom I quote. Firſt, that *ſeventeen horſes* on an average are killed by the bulls each day; and that *ſixty* horſes have been known to periſh in a day. Secondly, that among the official attendants on the Bull-feaſts, is a prieſt appointed to adminiſter the ſacrament to perſons mortally wounded in the conflict. He concludes his account

moſt vehement in their applauſe when the ſcene of danger is at the height. I ſtate theſe facts as affording an impreſſive example of the force of cuſtom; and a warning of the firmneſs with which the deſpotiſm of faſhion may in many caſes require to be withſtood, even when it is aſpiring to juriſdiction merely over amuſements. If in the preſent age, in a Chriſtian country, among a people which lays claim to conſiderable refinement, faſhion has power to benumb the ſympathetic emotions of humanity which characteriſe the female heart; to render exhibitions of cruelty and bloodſhed, the miſeries of tortured animals (*b*), and the dangers of their wretched aſſailants, not

count in the following terms: "The fondneſs of the "Spaniards for this diverſion is ſcarcely to be conceived. "Men, women, and children, rich and poor, all give "the preference to it beyond all other public ſpectacles." His teſtimony might receive confirmation, were it neceſſary, from other authorities.

(*b*) In the former part of the ſixteenth century, Bear-baiting is affirmed to have been "a favourite diverſion, "exhibited as a ſuitable amuſement for a Princeſs."

not merely tolerable to female eyes, but a ſpectacle gratifying beyond every other in the way of amuſement; let it not be thought very improbable, that in our own country faſhion may, on ſome occaſions, prove herſelf able to attach women to amuſements, which, though neither ſtained with blood, nor derived from the infliction of pain, may be ſuch as for other reaſons ought to be univerſally reprobated and exploded. And whenever ſuch occaſions may ariſe, let every woman remember, that modes of amuſement intrinſically wrong, or in any reſpect unbecoming the female ſex, are not tranſformed into innocent recreations by the countenance of numbers, nor by the ſanction, if they ſhould obtain the ſanction, of nobility, or of a court.

Henry's Hiſtory of England, vol. vi. p. 671. An amuſement thus countenanced was probably acceptable to Engliſh ladies in general. It appears, at a later period, to have ſtill maintained a place among the recreations of women of rank. Among the ſpectacles diſplayed for the diverſion of Queen Elizabeth, when ſhe was entertained at Kenilworth Caſtle by the Earl of Leiceſter, bear-baitings and boxing-matches are enumerated by the hiſtorian of the feſtivity.

Conſcien-

Conſcientious vigilance to avoid an improper choice of amuſements, and an undue ſacrifice of time to them, is a duty of great importance, not only becauſe time ſpent amiſs can never be recalled, but alſo becauſe, by the nature of the engagements in which the hours of leiſure and relaxation are employed, the manners, the diſpoſitions, and the whole character, are materially affected. Let the volume of any judicious traveller through a foreign country be opened in the part where he delineates the purſuits, the general conduct, the prevailing moral or immoral ſentiments of the people. He will there be found to beſtow attention on their cuſtomary diverſions, not only becauſe the account of them adds entertainment to his narrative, and is neceſſary in order to complete the picture of national manners, but alſo becauſe they form one of the ſources to which national opinions, virtues, and vices, may be traced. It is true, that the amuſements which prevail in any country will depend, in a conſiderable degree, on the tone of ſentiment and

opinion prevailing there; becauſe a conformity to the exiſting ſtate of general ſentiment and opinion is neceſſary to render public amuſements generally acceptable. But it is alſo true, that the latter exert a reciprocal influence on the former; and are among the moſt active of the cauſes by which it may be altered or upheld. If he who affirmed that, were he allowed to compoſe the ballads of a nation, he would, at pleaſure, change its form of government, uttered a boaſt not altogether unfounded in the principles of human nature; with juſter confidence might he have engaged to produce moſt important effects on the manners, opinions, and moral character of a nation, ſhould he be inveſted with full power over all the public diverſions. The influence of amuſements on character is manifeſt in both ſexes. A young woman, however, muſt be deemed more liable than an individual of the other ſex, to have the diſpoſitions of the heart eſſentially affected by favourite modes of entertainment. Her time is not abſorbed, nor her turn of mind formed and ſteadied,

by

by profeſſional habits and occupations: and her ſuperior quickneſs of feeling renders her the more alive to impreſſions conveyed through a pleaſurable medium. Tacitus, in his deſcription of the manners of the ancient inhabitants of Germany, dwells with merited praiſe on the ſingular modeſty of the women; and aſſigns as a principal cauſe of this virtuous excellence, their not being corrupted by ſeducing ſpectacles and diverſions (*i*). The remark is made with his uſual acuteneſs of moral reflection. And we cannot doubt, that it was ſuggeſted by his experience of the melancholy depravation of conduct in the ladies of Rome, reſulting from their attendance on the Amphitheatre and the Circus.

Since then, it is evident that the character and diſpoſitions cannot fail to be in ſome meaſure changed by the amuſements habitually purſued; and that alterations of ſupreme importance have taken place, and

(*i*) "Quod nec ſpectaculorum illecebris, nec conviviorum irritationibus corruptæ."—*De Moribus Germ.*

may therefore again take place, under their influence; it ſeems proper to add a few diſtinct obſervations on the different claſſes of public diverſions, which are at preſent frequented in this country by perſons in the upper and the middle ranks of life.

The claſs of amuſements which, in conſequence of having aſſumed to itſelf a ſort of pre-eminence in dignity and ſplendor over other ſcenes of entertainment, claims to be noticed in the firſt place, conſiſts of thoſe in which the parties engaged appear under the diſguiſe of a borrowed character. It includes all thoſe meetings which, however diſtinguiſhed each from the other in the faſhionable world by diverſities of form and other circumſtances, may here be comprehended under the general name of maſquerades. Amuſements of this ſort have alſo a pre-eminence different from that which has already been aſcribed to them; an inherent pre-eminence, which entitles them in a moral point of view to the earlieſt conſideration. It is a pre-eminence in

in the power of doing miſchief. Of all the authoriſed modes of public entertainment now countenanced by perſons of credit of either ſex, theſe are, in proportion to their frequency and extent, beyond doubt the moſt pernicious. They are calculated to ſurpaſs the reſt in encouraging evil, and to fall ſhort of them all in every thing like a counterpoiſe of good. Their dangerous tendency ariſes from a circumſtance eſſential to their nature; from the ſtate of concealment under which the individuals preſent keep themſelves from the knowledge of each other. To affirm this general ſtate of concealment to be eſſential to the nature, and inſeparable from the amuſement, of a maſquerade, is not too ſtrong language. A few of the parties may be diſcovered to each other without diminution of entertainment to the principal number: and the converſation which may ariſe between perſons, where detection has taken place on one ſide only, may occaſionally create an acceſſion of mirth. But let all the parties, or even the prin-

cipal ſhare, become mutually known, and there would remain nothing to ſurpriſe and to intereſt. Curioſity might be willing to employ a few minutes in gazing on the dreſſes, and in fixing in her memory the names of the individuals by whom they had ſeverally been aſſumed. But the pageant would almoſt inſtantly become inſipid; and the ſultans, the chimney-ſweepers, the harlequins, the ſhepherdeſſes, and the nuns, would ſpeedily regard each other with the indifference with which they would view the motley tinſel of a troop of morrice-dancers, or the kings and queens of gilded gingerbread at a fair. Now, if invention were to occupy itſelf in deviſing ſituations, ſituations I mean not incompatible with the forms of public amuſement, which ſhould be ſpecifically adapted to encourage and forward the enterpriſes of vice, to undermine the firmneſs of innocence, or, if we rate the miſchief at the loweſt degree, to wear away the delicacy of a young woman, and ſupply its place by petulant aſſurance: what ſcheme could be more obvious

vious or more auſpicious than to take away the reſtraints of openneſs and ſhame; to give ſcope for unbounded licence of ſpeech and action, by covering the ſpeakers and actors with obſcurity; and under theſe circumſtances to bring together in one promiſcuous aſſemblage, the inexperienced and the artful, the virtuous and the profligate? But the profligate, it will, perhaps, be ſaid in reply by the advocate for theſe diverſions, ſhall be excluded from well-regulated maſquerades. The doors ſhall not fly open at the approach of every one who has money to hire a dreſs and purchaſe a ticket. A proper introduction ſhall be required, and acceſs granted only to *good company*. Are theſe precautions, then, obſerved in moſt maſquerades? It is conceded that they are not. Let us aſk a ſecond queſtion ſtill more to the point: Is it poſſible that they can be obſerved, with effect, in any? Bar the doors with the utmoſt care; watch them with unceaſing attention; preſcribe check upon check, paſſport upon paſſport; exact every attainable teſtimonial, certificate, and recommend-

commendation; eſtabliſh every barrier of form and etiquette; and vice will laugh at your ſolicitude, and overleap all your obſtacles at pleaſure. What is to qualify a perſon for admiſſion to your well-regulated maſquerade? Will you not deem birth and fortune, and liberal connections, poliſhed manners, and a character outwardly decent, to be ſatisfactory qualifications? Are theſe qualifications, which are all that are required to enroll a perſon among thoſe whom the world claſſes under the denomination of good company; which are by no means to be found in all perſons whom the world honours with that title; which are recognized as a paſſport into the private ſociety of individuals and families of rank and reſpectability: are theſe to be pronounced at the door of a public room inſufficient to make a perſon worthy of being allowed to purchaſe a ticket, and ſhare in the evening's amuſement? Could this ſyſtem of excluſion be maintained in practice? Could a ſyſtem ſtill ſtricter be maintained? If it be not practicable to uphold a ſyſtem

even

even much more ſtrict, there is an end of all your hopes of excluding the vicious. Birth, and wealth, and liberal connections, and poliſhed manners, and a character outwardly decent, are every day found to prove diſguiſes, which conceal profligate conduct and a corrupt heart. The ſociety of perſons, to whom this deſcription is applicable, is at all times dangerous to the innocent, and eſpecially to the young. It is dangerous in domeſtic intercourſe; it is dangerous in the ſcene of public reſort: but the danger is increaſed tenfold, when they are enabled to exerciſe their arts under a maſk. No longer acting in the face of day, before the world, before witneſſes whoſe countenance and good opinion they are aware that it would be unwiſe to forfeit; they are left, exempt from the curb of diſgrace and fear, unknown and irreſponſible, to indulge whatever ſhameful levity the ſcene and the hour may favour, to carry on whatever dark machination their intereſt and their paſſions may ſuggeſt. What conſiderate parent would expoſe his daughter to the riſk of having

having her ears inſulted by the mirth and jeſts of the unprincipled? What conſiderate parent would teach her, even if no further miſchief could poſſibly enſue, to ſeek for diverſion in a theatrical aſſumption of fictitious language and ſentiment, and in familiarity of converſation, and conteſts of ſnip-ſnap repartee, with ſtrangers? What conſiderate daughter would wiſh a parent to lead her, or to admit of her being led, into ſuch meetings?

Parents, who on the whole diſapprove of theſe diverſions, from a conviction of their pernicious tendency, are ſometimes known to be the very perſons who introduce their daughter to an acquaintance with them. They profeſs to introduce her on principle; affirming, that they deſign merely to let her be preſent at a maſquerade, once or twice, in order that ſhe may know what it is. Spontaneouſly to introduce their daughter into a ſituation of danger which there was no neceſſity that ſhe ſhould ever experience, is, in truth, a ſingular ſpecies of

wiſdom.

wiſdom. Is this the way to inſpire her with a perſuaſion that the amuſement in queſtion is one from which it becomes her to abſtain? Or is it rather the very method to kindle a fondneſs for theſe revels of midnight and concealment; revels, which ſhe never knew until initiated into them by a parent; revels, which, but for that initiation, ſhe might never have known; revels, into whoſe worſt exceſſes ſhe may hereafter plunge in conſequence of that initiation, when the force of parental authority ſhall be decayed, and a change of circumſtances ſhall leave her at liberty to gratify her deſires?

A plea which we ſhall perhaps hear advanced in behalf of theſe entertainments by perſons who, though far from inwardly approving them, cannot eaſily perſuade themſelves to decide in favour of conſcience againſt faſhion, and ſtudy to deceive themſelves by ſpecious pretences for doing wrong, is this: that maſquerades do no very great harm, becauſe they recur but ſeldom. In

reply

reply to ſuch a plea, it ſurely cannot be requiſite to ſay much. Indeed, it would not be neceſſary to add a ſingle word to the general obſervations already made, if they to whom this plea may be addreſſed would at once bring it to the teſt of reaſon, inſtead of being diſpoſed to allow it, as may not improbably be the caſe, on the authority of thoſe who urge it. It may be ſufficient, however, to remark, that, although in matters of indiſpenſable neceſſity we may be obliged to take a large portion of evil with the good, and to be content if on the whole the latter ſhould preponderate; it is not ſo with reſpect to any particular ſpecies of amuſement. The amuſement, whoſe chief praiſe is, that it occurs but ſeldom, ought manifeſtly to recur never.

It is from a thorough conviction that public entertainments of this nature ought, on moral conſiderations, to be laid aſide, that I have been led to ſpeak thus at length on the ſubject. At preſent, they are nearly confined to the precincts of the metropolis, and are not

not very frequent. But from their eſtabliſhment in the capital, from the countenance which they have received from people of rank, from the ſplendor and the very expenſiveneſs with which they are attended, they ſeem to poſſeſs the powers of attraction which may be likely to win more and more on what are called polite circles; and by degrees on thoſe perſons who, however unable to contend in politeneſs with their ſuperiors, are willing, though at the riſk of final ruin, to vie with them in extravagance.

If a public entertainment be of ſuch a nature and tendency that it ought on moral conſiderations to be laid aſide, every perſon is bound, in point of moral duty, to diſcountenance it. A truth ſo plain might, without preſumption, look for general acquieſcence. "But what," I hear it replied, "can be done by an individual? If I attend "the ſcene of amuſement, I am unnoticed in "the crowd: if I refrain, my abſence is "unknown. My example is unperceived,

"or

" or if perceived, is diſregarded: it neither " ſtrengthens, nor could invalidate, what " has the ſanction of general practice. To " think that I can reform the world, would " be arrogance and folly." This language, which on moſt occaſions is adopted by perſons who are in ſearch of apologies for continuing to indulge themſelves in a reprehenſible gratification, is ſometimes alſo the anſwer of diffident ſincerity. The diffident and ſincere may, perhaps, be led to ſuſpect the juſtice of their mode of reaſoning, when they reflect, that there is ſcarcely an enormity prevailing in public or in private life, in the conduct of nations or of individuals, in the management of buſineſs or in the purſuit of pleaſure, which is not palliated, vindicated, recommended, by the ſame line of argument. Is our unchriſtian traffic in ſlaves the ſubject of diſcuſſion? The radical iniquity of the trade is confeſſed: but we are told, that if we ſhould renounce it, other nations would continue to carry it on: why then, it is ſaid, are we to deſiſt? Are unwarrantable cuſtoms in commercial tranſ-

actions

actions pointed out? The merchant admits that there is cauſe of blame; but alleges, that he neither inſtituted nor can aboliſh the practice: and aſks why he is to be more ſcrupulous than his neighbours. Similar inſtances might be multiplied to almoſt any extent. In all caſes of this nature, the language of the world is; If you cannot prevent the commiſſion of a criminal act, why are you to leave to others the profit or the pleaſure which will attend it? The language of Revelation is; "Be not a partaker in "other men's ſins. Keep thyſelf pure (*k*)." The former is the rule by which man is diſpoſed to judge: the latter is the rule by which God will judge. You ſay that you cannot reform the world. Cannot you reform yourſelf? How is a prevailing bad cuſtom of any kind to be extinguiſhed otherwiſe than by being abandoned by the individuals who have upheld it? And by what means have you been exempted from the general obligation? It is of no importance in this view of the queſtion, whether

(*k*) 1 Tim. v. 22.

thouſands will follow your example, or not a ſingle individual will be made better by it. Look to the moral benefit of others; but look firſt to the moral benefit of that perſon who has the moſt at ſtake in your actions; look firſt to yourſelf.

But the aſſertion that your example is inconſiderable, and will be inefficacious, deſerves a more particular examination. Has example no effect, either to eſtabliſh or to diſcountenance a ſpecies of public entertainment? Or is it the example of the female ſex only that is without influence? You reply, that the example of women of elevated ſtation has a moſt powerful effect: that the entertainments of which we are ſpeaking would have now been far more popular and frequent than they are, if the perſon moſt eminent in rank of your own ſex in this kingdom had favoured them with her encouragement, inſtead of meritoriouſly diſtinguiſhing herſelf by withholding her patronage: and that the pattern exhibited by the wives and daughters of nobility

nobility will ever have great and extenſive efficacy, as well among others of the ſame rank, as among their inferiors. This acknowledgement is ſufficient: it contains the principle of every conceſſion which can be deſired. You are neither a queen, nor of noble birth. Your example will not have the commanding force derived from royalty, nor the attractions which accompany the peereſs. It will not draw multitudes in its train: it may influence few: but are you certain that it will influence none? Is is poſſible for you to know beforehand, that it will not influence one individual? And if it has a beneficial influence on one individual, is this an effect to be deſpiſed? Is the very chance of ſuch an effect to be diſregarded? But is it not probable, is it not almoſt certain, that the force of your example will be more widely felt? Put the caſe fairly to yourſelf. If a young woman, of your own age and ſtation, and of your own neighbourhood, had declined the public amuſement which has given riſe to this diſcuſſion, and had confeſſedly declined it for

the reaſons which have recently been urged againſt it; would her example have excited no doubts in your own breaſt? If it had found you involved in doubts, would it not have ſtrengthened them? If it had found you impelled by falſe ſhame to act contrary to your judgement, would it not have ſuſtained you? Might not an oppoſite example on her part have prevented or removed your doubts, or have given falſe ſhame the victory over your underſtanding and your conſcience? Might it not have on others the ſame effect as on yourſelf? Have you then no ſiſter, no relation, no friend, no acquaintance, whom your example could move? Are you ſo little loved, ſo little eſteemed, that there is not a ſingle perſon in your own family, or among your connections, not a ſingle perſon either in your own ſituation in life, or of rank ſomewhat above or ſomewhat below it, on whom your ſentiments and conduct would operate either in the way of recommendation or the contrary? If this ſuppoſition be poſſible, how muſt you have lived!

Remember

Remember then theſe two plain and momentous rules of conduct, at which we have arrived. Firſt, that on every occaſion you are to act preciſely in that manner, which you believe that moral rectitude would of itſelf require you to adopt independently of any reference to effects which may be produced by your example. And ſecondly, that whatever may be your ſtation in life, there is no caſe in which your example cannot do harm; nor any in which it may not do good.

To ſome perſons I may, perhaps, appear to have dwelt on the ſuppoſed inefficacy of individual example, and on the duty of abſtaining from every proceeding which conſcience, previouſly to all conſideration of the probable effect of that example, pronounces to be in itſelf morally wrong, with an extraordinary degree of particularity and ſolicitude. I have, in truth, been anxious to explain myſelf on theſe topics with perſpicuity. For I have been fully conſcious, that in pointing out their bearings on the

conduct of an individual with reſpect to one ſpecies of public amuſement, I have, in fact, been aſcertaining two moral rules, which may be applied almoſt daily and hourly, and to many of the moſt important occurrences and tranſactions in life. If theſe rules have been ſatisfactorily eſtabliſhed, it would be not only ſuperfluous, but tedious, to revive the argument in detail hereafter. I would therefore requeſt the reader to bear them carefully in mind; to conſider them as meant to be applied to every branch of moral behaviour which may be diſcuſſed in the ſubſequent pages; and to turn her thoughts to them, and to the reaſoning on which they are founded, whenever in the future intercourſe of life he ſhall hear the common but very miſtaken opinions, from the effect of which they are deſigned to guard her, brought forward to influence her conduct.

CHAP. IX.

THE SUBJECT OF AMUSEMENTS CONTINUED.

Theatrical Entertainments—Muſical Entertainments—Sunday Concerts—Dancing—Gaming and Cards—On Exceſs in the Purſuit of Amuſements.

THEATRICAL Amuſements are thoſe which offer themſelves to our attention in the next place.

The ſtage is an inſtrument too powerful not to produce viſible and extenſive effects wherever it is permanently employed. To the ſentiments diſplayed in the tragic or the comic ſcene, to the examples of conduct afforded by popular characters under intereſting circumſtances, and to the general tone of manners and morals which pervades dramatic repreſentations, the opinions, the

diſpoſitions, and the actions of the frequenters of the theatre will acquire ſome degree of ſimilitude. What is heard with admiration and pleaſure, will be remembered: what is ſeen under thoſe impreſſions, will be imitated. The impreſſion of the ſentiment will be, in ſome meaſure, modified by the leading qualities and inclinations of the mind of the hearer: and the fidelity with which the example will be copied, will depend on a variety of circumſtances favouring or diſcouraging cloſeneſs of imitation. The growth of the plant will vary, as it is fixed in auſpicious or in ungenial ſoil: the quantity of its fruit will be affected by the ſmiles and frowns of the ſky. But there is ſeldom a ſoil ſo ungenial as entirely to obſtruct its vegetation; ſeldom a ſky ſo frowning as for ever to diveſt it of fertility. From antient times to the preſent hour the influence of the Stage has been diſcerned. Has it been the object to inculcate or to explode particular opinions; to elevate or to degrade the characters of individuals;

to

to ſtrengthen or to ſhake exiſting forms of government? From the days of Grecian and Roman antiquity, down to the French revolution, the Stage has been an engine eagerly employed by thoſe who have had it under their control. Is its influence unperceived or diſregarded in our own country? The legal reſtraints to which the theatre is ſubjected, and the ſtamp of official approbation which every new play muſt receive before it can be exhibited, anſwer the queſtion. The loweſt orders of the people, mutable, uninformed, and paſſionately addicted to ſpectacles of amuſement, may probably be acted upon, through the medium of theatrical repreſentations, with greater facility and ſucceſs than other claſſes of the community. But, to ſpeak of individuals among the upper and middle ranks of life, young women are the perſons likely to imbibe the ſtrongeſt tinge from the ſentiments and tranſactions ſet before them in the drama. Openneſs of heart, warmth of feeling, a lively perception of the ludicrous, a ſtrong ſenſe of the charms of novelty,

novelty, readineſs to adopt opinions recommended by faſhion, proneneſs to give large ſcope to the influence of aſſociation and of ſympathy, theſe are circumſtances which characteriſe youth, more eſpecially youth in the female ſex. And they are circumſtances which render thoſe whom they characteriſe liable, in a peculiar degree, to be practically impreſſed by the language and examples brought forward on the Stage.

The Engliſh Stage has, for a conſiderable time, laboured under the heavy imputation of being open to ſcenes and language of groſs indelicacy, which foreign theatres would have proſcribed. This obſervation is applicable even to our tragedies. Of Engliſh comedy, an eminent writer (*l*) of our own country

(*l*) Dr. Blair, in his Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres, 4to. vol. ii. p. 547; where he quotes ſeveral inſtances in confirmation of his remark. Mr. Diderot pronounces Engliſh comedy to be "without morals." Voltaire, who, undoubtedly, was no rigid moraliſt, ſpeaks of it

country obſerves, that, although we ourſelves overlook its immorality, "all foreigners, "the French eſpecially, who are accuſtomed "to a better regulated and more decent "Stage, ſpeak of it with ſurpriſe and aſto-"niſhment." Of the moral changes which the Stage may have experienced in France

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it in the ſtrongeſt terms of reprobation. M. Moralt, in his Letters upon the French and Engliſh Nations, aſcribes the corruption of manners in London to comedy, as its chief cauſe. "Their comedy," he ſays, "is like that of no other "country. It is the ſchool in which the youth of both "ſexes familiariſe themſelves with vice, which is never "repreſented there as vice, but as mere gaiety.'"

Dr. Blair's opinion of the principal of the Engliſh comic writers, from the reign of Charles II. to that of George II. is contained in the following ſentence: "It is extremely "unfortunate that, together with the freedom and boldneſs "of the comic ſpirit in Britain, there ſhould have been "joined ſuch a ſpirit of indecency and licentiouſneſs, as "has diſgraced Engliſh comedy beyond that of any nation "ſince the days of Ariſtophanes." Lectures, vol. ii. p. 542. He adds, p. 547, 548, that "of late years a ſen-"ſible reformation, derived in a conſiderable degree from "the French theatre, has begun to take place." The improvement is unqueſtionable; but the delicacy and the morality of moſt of our modern comedies are only comparative.

ſince

ſince the commencement of the political convulſions which for ſome years paſt have agitated, and ſtill continue to agitate, that country, I am not qualified to ſpeak. But, antecedently to thoſe events, it ſeems to have been the concurrent opinion of competent judges, that, although corruption of manners and of private conduct had ariſen at Paris to an exceſs by no means to be paralleled at London, the drama of the former capital was far ſuperior in purity to that of the latter. Let not this fact be deemed contradictory to the opinion recently given of the powerful effect, which theatrical repreſentations are adapted to produce on the moral character and behaviour of thoſe who frequent them. In France, public diſſoluteneſs was puſhed on by cauſes from which, of late, England has been, by the bleſſing of Providence, exempted; cauſes which, though capable of deriving ſtrength from a depraved Stage, would not have been effectually withſtood by the leſſons of theatres more pure than thoſe of Paris. Is it neceſſary to particulariſe them? The diſbelief,

general

general among the higher orders, of a religion, depreſſed, on the one hand, by a load of ſuperſtition, and aſſailed, on the other, by writers of eminent talents and reputation; and the example of a Court, commonly ſignalized by unbluſhing profligacy, and ſpreading the contagion of vice throughout the empire. We know that, in one at leaſt of theſe particulars, England was unhappy enough, during a part of the laſt century, to furniſh a picture reſembling that of France: and we know what was at that period the ſtate of our drama. The torrent of immorality and profaneneſs, which in the days of Charles the Second, and for a conſiderable time afterwards, deluged the theatre, has ſubſided; or is no longer permitted to roll its polluted and infamous tide acroſs the Stage. The glaring colours of vice, which gave no diſguſt to our anceſtors, would ſhock, if not the virtue, yet the refinement, of a modern audience. Let the friends of religion, of their country, of private worth and of public happineſs, be thankful for the change

change which has taken place. But has the change been complete? Is the Britiſh Stage now irreproachable? Does it exhibit no ſcenes which give pain to modeſt eyes, no language grating to modeſt ears? Does it exhibit nothing which a Chriſtian need be aſhamed of writing, of acting, of witneſſing? Or if it be ſtill culpable; is it but rarely, and tranſiently? Let thoſe who are the beſt acquainted with the theatre anſwer theſe queſtions to their own conſciences. And whenever any woman is deliberating whether ſhe ſhall or ſhall not attend the repreſentation of a particular drama, let her aſk herſelf this further queſtion among others to be ſuggeſted; Whether ſhe is not bound in conſcience, if ſhe lays claim to the conſiſtency of a Chriſtian, at once to decide in the negative, unleſs ſhe has ſufficient reaſon to believe that the former enquiry, viewed as relating to that drama, can, with truth, be anſwered to her ſatisfaction? Had theſe pages been addreſſed to perſons of the other ſex, the ſame principles of deciſion would

would have been ſtated as no leſs clearly incumbent on men.

The Stage is deſigned to furniſh a faithful picture of life and manners. Be it admitted for a moment that the picture is exhibited, and ought to be exhibited, merely for the purpoſe of amuſement. Yet, unleſs we are to maintain either the abſurd propoſition, that amuſements have no influence on character, or the wicked propoſition, that amuſements may lawfully be of a corrupting nature; the picture ought, at leaſt, to be ſuch as ſhall not be injurious to the diſpoſitions of the heart. But when amuſement, though it may be the ſole object of the careleſs ſpectator of the drama, is manifeſtly not the point in which the whole effect of the repreſentation terminates; when the ſentiments delivered, and the line of conduct exemplified, by the favourite actor, in a favourite character, are found by experience to impreſs kindred opinions, and a tendency to a ſimilar train of proceeding on the audi-

ence; the Stage ought to aſſume a higher office, and to recommend itſelf as the nurſe of virtue (*m*). If it be falſe to its truſt,

(*m*) The effect produced by Schiller's Tragedy of the Robbers on the ſcholars at the ſchool of Fribourg, where it was repreſented ſoon after its firſt appearance, is well known. "They were ſo ſtruck and captivated with the "grandeur of the character of its hero, Moor, that they "agreed to form a band like his in the foreſts of Bohemia; "had elected a young nobleman for their chief; and had "pitched on a beautiful young lady for his Amelia; whom "they were to carry off from her parents' houſe to ac- "company their flight. To the accompliſhment of this "deſign they had bound themſelves by the moſt ſolemn "and tremendous oaths. But the conſpiracy was diſco- "vered by an accident, and its execution prevented." See an Account of the German Theatre by Henry Mackenzie Eſq. in the ſecond volume of the Tranſactions of the Royal Society of Edinburgh.

The author of this tragedy has ſince acknowledged with great candour, and reprobated in the ſtrongeſt terms, the pernicious tendency of his own production. Ibid.

In the ſame paper it is ſaid that, "ſoon after the publi- "cation of Goethe's Sorrows of Werter, it became a "badge of faſhion among the young men of Germany to "wear as a uniform the dreſs, which Werter is deſcribed "as having on in one of his interviews with Charlotte."

"The robberies committed daily in the ſtreets, during "the repreſentation of the Beggar's Opera, were beyond "the

truſt, it forfeits every title to public patronage, and ought to be exploded as a nuiſance moſt dangerous to the community. Is the Stage then, it will be ſaid, to intrude itſelf into the functions of the pulpit? Are no perſonages to be introduced but women of demure ſobriety of demeanour, and men of unimpeachable integrity? Are the attractions of mirth and wit to be diſclaimed? Are folly and affectation no longer to be encountered with ridicule? Are villainy and fraud no longer to be chaſtiſed with the laſh of ſatire! If

" the example of former times. And ſeveral thieves and " robbers afterwards confeſſed in Newgate, that they raiſed " their courage in the playhouſe by the ſongs of their hero " Macheath, before they ſallied forth on their deſperate " nocturnal exploits."—" So notorious were the evil con- " ſequences of its frequent repreſentation become, that in " the year 1773 the Middleſex Juſtices united with Sir " John Fielding in requeſting Mr. Garrick to deſiſt from " performing it; as they were of opinion that it was never " repreſented on the ſtage without creating an additional " number of real thieves." See the Life of Gay in the Biographia Britannica.

The influence of ſome other dramas, if leſs conſpicuous in particular inſtances, has perhaps been on the whole not leſs prejudicial.

the Stage is to be curtailed of its moſt copious ſources of amuſement, how is it to intereſt, how is it to attract ſpectators? If the mixture of virtue and vice, and the unbounded diverſities of character, which prevail in the world, are not to be exhibited, how is a picture of real life and manners to be diſplayed? The reſtrictions which, if enforced, would render the ſpectaeles of the Stage irreproachable, are ſuch as would neither lead it from its natural province, nor cripple its powers of entertainment. To conſtitute a moral Stage, it is not requiſite that Lectures on Divinity and Ethics ſhould be read there; nor that the attractions of mirth and wit ſhould be proſcribed; nor that worthleſs characters ſhould be excluded from the drama. But it is neceſſary that the general effect of the piece ſhould be unequivocally virtuous. It is neceſſary that neither falſe principles nor erroneous concluſions in morality ſhould be ſo brought forward, as to be likely to deceive the underſtandings, and influence the future conduct, of the auditors.

auditors. It is neceſſary that *Honour*, the offſpring of Pride, ſhould not be enthroned in the place of Virtue, the daughter of Religion. It is neceſſary that mirth and wit ſhould neither directly nor indirectly, openly or covertly, be polluted with the ſmalleſt tincture of indelicacy. It is neceſſary that vice be not clothed in amiable colours; in colours which may diſguiſe its deformity from the ſpectator, or tempt him to pardon, perhaps to imitate it, for the ſake of the engaging qualities with which it is ſurrounded. He knows little of human nature, who thinks that the youthful mind will be ſecured from the infecting influence of a vicious character, adorned with poliſhed manners, wit, fortitude, and generoſity, by a frigid moral, delivered at the concluſion, or to be deduced from the events of the drama. Neither ought vice ever to be exhibited under circumſtances of open groſſneſs, or, what is ſtill worſe, of groſſneſs veiled under a maſk of decorum. What would not be endured by modeſt

eyes and modeſt ears in a private company, ought not to be endured upon a Stage. Language which could not be heard, incidents which could not be witneſſed, at home without a bluſh, ought not to be heard or witneſſed abroad. It is not the place, but the circumſtance, which corrupts. Among the uſual cauſes by which female modeſty is worn away, I know not one more efficacious, than the indelicate ſcenes and language to which women are familiariſed at the theatre. Nor among the cauſes by which ſimplicity of manners is corrupted, the habit of viewing with complacence perſons of infamous character is acquired, a variety of falſe principles in morality is upheld, and pride, in particular, under different forms and modifications, is encouraged, can there be named any one apparently more powerful than the Stage.

It is evident that, when an individual wiſhes conſcientiouſly to determine whether

ther ſhe can properly give to the theatre and its frequenters the continuance of her preſence and example, ſhe ought to extend her views beyond the morality or immorality of particular dramas. She is to take into the account the general effect produced, or likely to be produced, by the Stage; and to ſatisfy herſelf whether the inſtitution is, on the whole, beneficial, or at leaſt harmleſs, to the community. In this enquiry ſhe is not to overlook the prevailing conduct of the actors and actreſſes, as far as it may fairly be aſcribed to their profeſſion. While the preſent ſtate of things continues, it cannot be wonderful that perſons, who are ſeriouſly concerned for the moſt important intereſts of human beings, and deſirous to act in uniform conſiſtency with Chriſtian principles, ſhould be little diſpoſed to countenance an inſtitution, which ſo often diſplays incitements to vice, inculcates pernicious ſentiments and maxims of conduct, and appears to produce very lamentable

effects on a large proportion of thoſe who profeſſionally belong to it (*n*).

For

(*n*) The ſuperintendence of the drama, exerciſed by legal authority to prevent the Stage from being rendered an inſtrument of political machinations, and of perſonal calumny and reſentment, is extremely uſeful. Other benefits of the higheſt value would attend its exertions, were they directed with an increaſe of energy to purify the Stage from incidents, expreſſions, and alluſions, offenſive to modeſty, and injurious to the principles of moral rectitude. Whoever poſſeſſes a power of accompliſhing a change of ſuch moment to the intereſts of morality and virtue, cannot but be reſponſible for the uſe and for the neglect of it. The influence of the Managers of our Theatres, aided by the authority of the Lord Chamberlain, would probably be adequate to accompliſh the purification of the Stage in this particular. But if not, there is a quarter from which it might be effected at once. To thoſe who act under a Royal licence, a ſingle hint from Royal Authority would be ſufficient. The reſpect due to wiſhes intimated from that authority would, of itſelf, inſure the rejection of every future compoſition contaminated with indecency; and the omiſſion of every ſcene, paſſage, and expreſſion, liable to a ſimilar objection in any of the performances, whether of antient or of modern date, already in poſſeſſion of the Stage. Nor could the interpoſition, to which I have ventured to allude, fail of proving in its conſequences an act of extreme kindneſs to the performers at the public theatres. That diſſoluteneſs

of

For ſome years paſt the cuſtom of acting plays in private theatres, fitted up by individuals of fortune, has occaſionally prevailed. It is a cuſtom liable to this objection among others; that it is almoſt certain to prove, in its effects, injurious to the female performers. Let it be admitted, that theatres of this deſcription no longer preſent the flagrant impropriety of ladies bearing a part in the drama in conjunction with profeſſed players. Let it be admitted, that the drama ſelected will be in its language and conduct always irreprehenſible. Let it even be admitted, that eminent theatrical talents will not hereafter gain admiſſion upon ſuch a Stage for men of ambiguous, or worſe than ambiguous, character. Take the benefit of all theſe favourable circumſtances: yet, what is even then the tendency of ſuch amuſe-

of manners and conduct, which, whatever meritorious exceptions may exiſt, is admitted to be prevalent among them, cannot but be aſcribed, in part, to the profane and profligate language put into their mouths by the authors whoſe works they exhibit.

ments? To encourage vanity; to excite a thirſt of applauſe and admiration on account of attainments which, if they are to be thus exhibited, it would commonly have been far better for the individual not to poſſeſs; to deſtroy diffidence by the unreſtrained familiarity with perſons of the other ſex, which inevitably reſults from being joined with them in the drama; to create a general fondneſs for the peruſal of plays, of which ſo many are improper to be read; and for attending dramatic repreſentations, of which ſo many are unfit to be witneſſed.

Another claſs of public amuſements compriſes thoſe in which muſic conſtitutes the principal ſhare, or the whole, of the entertainment. To the firſt of theſe deſcriptions Operas belong. As they may, in ſome meaſure, alſo be regarded in the light of dramatic performances, moſt of the remarks already offered on the ſubject of the Stage may be extended to them. The dances which accompany them, or the

the dreſſes of the performers, are not unfrequently ſuch as ought not to be tolerated by modeſt ſpectators. The entertainments which conſiſt wholly of muſic are commonly ſo free in their own nature from objectionable circumſtances, as not to require particular obſervation. It muſt, however, be added, that the ſongs introduced are ſometimes worſe than fooliſh; and that private concerts in high life are now conducted on ſo large a ſcale, as frequently to ſubject ladies who perform in them to ſome of the dangers, which have recently been mentioned as awaiting the female performer in private theatres.

When it was ſaid, that private muſical entertainments were commonly free from circumſtances intrinſically objectionable; the benefit of the conceſſion muſt not be extended to one, which faſhion has recently imported from the Continent and eſtabliſhed in the Capital, namely, meetings for the purpoſe of hearing muſic on Sunday evenings. Such meetings have been encouraged,

and

and frequented, not only by thoſe ladies who are always ready to take wing to every ſcene of reſort and entertainment, but by ſome who may be ſuppoſed no ſtrangers to ſentiments of piety, and are profeſſedly ſolicitous for the external obſervances of religion. I ſpeak not of concerts, which, under the ſpecious name of ſacred muſic, a name countenanced by a ſcanty admixture of religious performances interſperſed ſolely for the purpoſes of decorum and deluſion, are in no material reſpect, except in hypocriſy, different from thoſe which are uſual on the common days of the week. The tendency of ſuch concerts, and the motives of thoſe who inſtitute them, are too plain to need illuſtration. The meetings to which alone I mean to refer, are thoſe which are what they profeſs to be, meetings intended for the excluſive performance of ſuch muſic as is in itſelf adapted to the day. Their effects, however, are, in various ways, likely to be ſuch as will be very far from extending the influence of Religion; and ſuch,

therefore, as ought not to be aided by the countenance of its friends. The glow of devotion which is kindled in the breaſt by proper muſic, in a proper place, is moſt favourable to holineſs. And far be it from me to intimate, that ſacred muſic is to be confined to the walls of a church. Let it hallow private houſes; and not on Sundays only, but on all days. On the evening of the Sabbath in particular; let its efficacy be called in to revive the attention and excite the ardour of piety. But let the performers and the auditors be the members of the family. Or, if admittance be granted to any other perſon, let it be only to the intimate friend who comes without parade, and comes for the purpoſe of uniting in an act of religion. If you fling open your doors to numbers; if you prepare yourſelf and your houſe as for the cuſtomary reception of company; if your ſervants are occupied in the ſame hurry of attendance as at a ball or aſſembly; if the ſtreet rings with the tumult, and is obſtructed with the chariots of your viſitors;

can

can you think that religion will, on the whole, be promoted by the employment of the evening? Your intentions, be it acknowledged, have been pure. The muſic has been well ſelected. It has been performed throughout by perſons not hired from the theatre, nor hired at all. You have felt, during the performance, the warmth of religious gratitude, and breathed the ſincerity of prayer. Conſider, then, what may be ſtated, even while you take the advantage of theſe moſt favourable circumſtances, on the adverſe ſide of the queſtion. You have diſtracted your thoughts, and waſted your time beforehand by the buſtle of preparation. You have deprived your domeſtics of the beſt opportunity which the week affords them for religious thought. You have loſt the advantage of the calm and uninterrupted devotion, which you might have practiſed during the time occupied by the concert, either in private or in conjunction with your family. You have diſturbed the quiet of a neighbourhood, employed perhaps

haps better than yourſelf. You have exhibited to the undiſcerning multitude the appearance of being engaged on the Sabbath, as at other times, in the purſuit of amuſement. You have initiated or confirmed them in want of reverence for a day which, had it not been for the effect of your example, they might have continued, or might have learned, to keep holy.

It may be proper to obſerve in this place, that the practice of opening your houſe on Sunday evenings to the influx of all your acquaintance who may chooſe to frequent it as a ſcene of reſort and converſation, a practice by no means unexampled in the polite world, is productive of all the miſchiefs which ariſe from the Sunday concert; and is devoid of the oſtenſible excuſe by which, in the other caſe, they are palliated.

Another claſs of public diverſions comprehends thoſe meetings in which the profeſſed

feſſed amuſement is dancing: an amuſement in itſelf both innocent and ſalubrious, and therefore by no means improper, under ſuitable regulations, to conſtitute the occaſional entertainment of youth. In the ball-room, however, a young woman has more temptations to encounter than ſhe has experienced at the public or at the private concert. At the former of theſe ſcenes of muſical feſtivity, ſhe may have felt the difficulty of repreſſing ſenſations of vanity as to perſonal appearance: at the latter, ſhe may have alſo been aſſailed by emotions allied to envy in conſequence of the ſuperior performance of another. But the objects which, during the ſeaſon of youth, moſt eaſily excited vanity and envy in the female breaſt, are thoſe which are preſented in the ball-room. This is deemed the ſtage for diſplaying the attractions, by the poſſeſſion of which a young woman is apt to be moſt elated: and they are here diſplayed under circumſtances moſt calculated to call forth the triumph and the animoſities of perſonal competition. This triumph, and theſe animoſities,

moſities, betray themſelves occaſionally to the leaſt diſcerning eye. But were the receſſes of the heart laid open, how often would the ſight of a ſtranger, of an acquaintance, even of a friend, ſuperior for the evening in the attractions of dreſs, or enjoying the ſuppoſed advantage of poſſeſſing a wealthier, a more lively, a more graceful, or a more faſhionable partner, be found to excite feelings of diſguſt, and of averſion not always ſtopping ſhort of malevolence! How often would the paſſions be ſeen inflamed, and every nerve agitated, by a thirſt for precedence; and invention be obſerved, labouring to mortify a rival by the affectation of indifference or of contempt! But if a young woman cannot partake of the amuſements of a ball-room, except at the expence of benevolence, of friendſhip, of diffidence, of ſincerity, of good humour, at the expence of ſome Chriſtian diſpoſition, ſome Chriſtian virtue, ſhe has no buſineſs there. The recreation, to others innocent, is, to her, a ſin.

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An evil of great moment, which is too frequently known to occur at the places of amuſement now under notice, is the introduction of women to undeſirable and improper acquaintance among the other ſex; undeſirable and improper, as I would now be underſtood to mean, in a moral point of view. Men of this deſcription commonly abound at all ſcenes of public reſort and entertainment; and are not ſeldom diſtinguiſhed by fortune and birth, gay and conciliating manners, and every qualification which is needful to procure a favourable reception in polite company. Hence, when they propoſe themſelves as partners in an aſſembly-room, a lady does not always find it eaſy, according to the rules of decorum, to decline the offer; and is ſometimes enticed by their external appearance, and by having ſeen other ladies ambitious of dancing with them, into a reprehenſible inclination not to decline it. The good principles or the worldly prudence of the relations or the friends who accompany her, will, in many caſes, guard her from falling,

falling, though but for a ſingle evening, into ſuch hands. But the ſolicitude of relations and friends is ſometimes directed excluſively to another object. They ſpare no pains to preſerve her from dancing with a perſon in rank or connections inferior to herſelf; and having gained that point, are contented. If their conſcience be apt to ſlumber, it behoves her own to be the more wakeful. If the alternative be, whether ſhe will incur the riſk, nay, the certainty, of ſitting ſtill during every dance, or give her hand to a partner whoſe offer, as ſhe knows, or ſtrongly apprehends, ought on principles of moral rectitude not to be accepted; the proper deciſion cannot long appear doubtful to modeſty and conſideration. The preſent cuſtom of changing partners at ſtated intervals is evidently attended with this bad conſequence, that it increaſes the difficulty of avoiding an objectionable aſſociate. Yet it has alſo the advantage of relieving a young woman the ſooner from ſuch an aſſociate, to whom ſhe may unwarily have engaged herſelf.

Women in various occurrences of life are betrayed, by a dread of appearing ungenteelly baſhful, and by a deſire of rendering themſelves agreeable, into an indiſcreet freedom of manners and converſation with men of whom they perhaps know but little; and ſtill more frequently into a greater degree of freedom with thoſe of whom they have more knowledge, than can fitly be indulged except towards perſons with whom they are connected by particular ties. The temptation is in no place more powerful than in a ball-room. Let not indiſcriminate familiarity be ſhewn towards all partners; nor injudicious familiarity towards any. To reject every boiſterous and unbecoming mode of dancing, and to obſerve in every point the ſtricteſt modeſty in attire, are cautions on which, in addreſſing women of delicacy, it is ſurely needleſs to inſiſt.

In particulariſing the different claſſes of female amuſements now prevailing, it is with deep regret that I perceive the neceſſity of adding the gaming-table to the number.

The

The occupations of that ſcene of anxiety, of paſſion, and of guilt, were once in the almoſt excluſive poſſeſſion of men. It was but ſeldom that an individual of the other ſex copied the infamous example. And when ſhe copied it, the imitation was attempted on an humble ſcale; and was carried on with a certain attention to privacy and decorum, which evinced a mind not altogether hardened by the practice of criminality, nor prepared to inſult the laws of the country with public manifeſtations of contempt. But in high life there are now to be found thoſe who have diſcarded the reſtraints of timidity and of ſhame. Relying on the influence of rank and faſhion, they ſpread their nets without diſguiſe; and exult in ſeeing the deſtructive circle thronged with married women and unmarried, old and young, venturing to the very borders of ruin, alike regardleſs of conſequences immediate or remote (*n*). In this promiſcuous aſſemblage

(*n*) The very meritorious and intelligent author of "A Treatiſe on the Police of the Metropolis" affirms in his introductory addreſs to the reader, (2d edit. p. xi.)

blage of the plunderers and the plundered, ſhe who has been hackneyed in the ways

that at this time (1796) there are in Weſtminſter at leaſt forty houſes open for the expreſs purpoſe of play, where Faro Banks are kept, or where Hazard, Rouge à noir, and other illegal games are introduced. Of theſe gaming tables he proceeds to ſtate that "*five are kept in the houſes* "*of ladies of faſhion, who are ſaid to receive fifty pounds* "*each rout, beſides one-eighth of the profits.*" Recurring to the ſame ſubject in another part of his work he makes the following remarks, among many others which well deſerve the attention of every perſon who upholds or is tempted to viſit a gaming table.

"By the 12th of George the ſecond, *the games of Faro,* "*Hazard, &c. are declared to be lotteries, ſubjecting the* "*perſons who keep them to a penalty of two hundred pounds,* "*and thoſe who play, to fifty pounds. One* witneſs only "is neceſſary to prove the offence before any juſtice of "the peace, *who forfeits ten pounds if he neglects to do his* "*duty.* And by the 8th of George the firſt, *the keeper of* "*a Faro table may be proſecuted for a lottery, where the* "*penalty is five hundred pounds.*"

"Such has been the anxiety of the legiſlature to ſuppreſs "Faro tables and other games of chance, that the ſevereſt "penalties have been inflicted, founded on the pernicious "conſequences of ſuch practices; and yet, to the diſgrace "of the Police of the Metropolis, houſes are opened under "the ſanction of high-ſounding names, where an indiſ-"criminate mixture of all ranks is to be found, from the "*finiſhed ſharper* to the *raw inexperienced youth*; and "where all thoſe evils exiſt in full force, which it was the "object of the legiſlature to remove."

"The

ways of polite life learns to join with her other acquiſitions the talents, the purſuits, and the morals of a profeſſed gameſter. In the mean time the artleſs and inexperienced, dazzled by ſurrounding example, drop their ſcruples and their apprehenſions one by one; and are gradually allured for-

"The idle vanity of being introduced into what is ſup-
"poſed to be genteel ſociety, where a faſhionable name an-
"nounces an intention of ſeeing company, has been pro-
"ductive of more *domeſtic miſery* and more *real diſtreſs*,
"*poverty, and wretchedneſs to families* in this great metro-
"polis, who but for their folly might have been eaſy and
"comfortable, than many volumes could detail."

"A miſtaken ſenſe of what conſtitutes human hap-
"pineſs leads the maſs of the people, who have the means
"of moving, in any degree, above the middle ranks of life,
"into the fatal error of mingling in what is erroneouſly
"called genteel company; if that can be called ſuch, where
"Faro tables and other games of hazard are introduced in
"private families: where the leaſt recommendation (and
"ſharpers ſpare no pains to obtain recommendations) ad-
"mits all ranks who can exhibit a genteel exterior; and
"where the young and the inexperienced are initiated in
"every propenſity tending to debaſe the human character,
"and taught to view with contempt every acquirement
"connected with thoſe duties, which lead to domeſtic
"happineſs, or to thoſe objects of utility which can render
"either ſex reſpectable in the world." P. 150—152.

ward from the low ſtake which at firſt was all that they propoſed to hazard, to riſk on one card, or one throw of the dice, ſums which bear a conſiderable proportion to the whole property which they poſſeſs, and even to the whole amount of their future expectations. It is no exaggeration to affirm that there are recent inſtances of young women having ſpeedily loſt at play their entire fortunes. And ſituations of pecuniary diſtreſs which, though very grievous, fall ſhort of abſolute ruin, are continually ſeen to ariſe from the ſame cauſes. But does the miſchief terminate, does it chiefly conſiſt, in pecuniary diſtreſs? If a ſchool is to be ſought where the ſerenity of the female mind may be ſupplanted by the moſt violent and the blackeſt paſſions; where the ſprings of benevolence and charity, of ſympathy and friendſhip may be dried up, and the heart conſigned for ever to obdurate ſelfiſhneſs; where the foundations of domeſtic miſery, of angry diſcontent, of blaſted hopes and unavailing ſorrows may be laid; where every

every principle of delicacy, of virtue, of religion may be ſapped, and prepared to be offered up on ſome preſſing emergency as a ſacrifice to money: let that ſchool be ſought at a gaming table, upheld by ſome perſon of faſhionable eſtimation. It is extremely to be lamented that women of reſpectability of character, women attentive on many occaſions to the dictates not of prudence only but of conſcience, and ſo deeply convinced of the dreadful evils attendant on gaming as ſcrupulouſly and at all times to abſtain from play, ſhould yet follow the ſtream of cuſtom ſo far as to be viſitors and ſpectators in the rooms, in which this ſyſtem of depredation and iniquity is carrying on. To countenance by their preſence an aſſembly known to be held for a purpoſe which it is impoſſible for them to approve, is the height of inconſiſtency. It is to add to wickedneſs the apparent ſanction of their authority. It is to ſilence the doubts of the wavering; and to preclude the inconſiderate from reflection. It is to contribute to extend a

moſt deſtructive practice to ranks of ſociety which it has not yet polluted. It is to encourage thoſe nuiſances to the community, who dare to ſtand forward in faſhionable life as the inſtitutors and patrons of the Faro Bank and the Hazard Table; whoſe effrontery, while it yet continues to eſcape the ſtrong arm of legal juſtice which arreſts inferior and leſs pernicious offenders, ought to be encountered with univerſal reſiſtance, and be conſtrained to read in every eye the language of deteſtation.

A paſſion for gaming, ſo eaſy to be excited, is one of the propenſities moſt difficult to be repreſſed. In barbarous as well as in poliſhed nations, in the loweſt as well as in the higheſt ranks of ſociety, the flame once kindled, is ſcarcely to be extinguiſhed. So captivating to moſt minds is the ſucceſſion of ſituations unforeſeen, uncertain, and characteriſed by viciſſitude; ſo intereſting is the pauſe of ſuſpenſe between hope and fear; ſuch is the confidence which

which almoſt every perſon places, if not on his ſkill, yet on his good fortune; that we cannot wonder if they to whom frequent temptations are preſented ſhould by degrees be enſnared in defiance of previous reſolves, and ultimately loſe ſight not only of prudence, but even of far ſuperior principles of conduct. Hence to guard againſt thoſe ſmall beginnings, by which conſequences ſo deplorable may be entailed, is a duty of no little importance in the ſcale of moral obligation. Some perſons, at preſent too cautious to adventure as parties in the game, think that they need not ſcruple to indulge themſelves in hazarding ſmall bets on the event of it. But they who begin with venturing ſmall ſums, eaſily learn to riſk larger. And they who, without playing themſelves, make their own profit or loſs to depend on the ſucceſs of an individual engaged in the conteſt, are themſelves gameſters. Others ſee no danger in the habit of frequenting the card table, provided that much money is not played for. To devote the evening

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to cards where the ſtakes are high, is manifeſtly to cheriſh a paſſion for gaming: when they are low, it is yet to encourage that paſſion, though in an inferior degree. The exiſtence of a ſtake, however minute, proves that application is made to the avaricious feelings of the mind; feelings which, ere long, will commonly look out for a more powerful ſtimulus. In proportion too as practice confers ſkill, or creates a perſuaſion that it is poſſeſſed, the deſire of diſplaying it, perhaps alſo of turning it to profit, is often ſeen to ariſe.

If we ſet aſide meetings profeſſedly or intentionally held for the purpoſe of gaming, the principal evil attending the uſe of cards may, perhaps, be fairly ſtated to conſiſt not ſo much in the reprehenſible paſſions which they excite, as in the quantity of time which they conſume. In many families, particularly in provincial towns, they regularly enter as the tea-table departs, and occupy ſeveral hours of the evening. In ſome houſes, where patience

tience is weaker, they appear ſpeedily after dinner. A conſiderable portion of every day, Sundays excepted, an exception which in the country may yet be commonly made, is thus rendered a mere blank; it is cut, as it were, out of life, and conſigned, upon the moſt favourable ſuppoſition, to vacuity and oblivion. What might have been the improvement made, the knowledge acquired, the rational pleaſure enjoyed, had theſe hours been habitually allotted to inſtructive converſation or intereſting books? Had it been the cuſtom of the family to allot them to ſuch employments before a paſſion for cards was become inveterate; habit would then have operated in ſupport of a judicious and uſeful mode of paſſing time as ſtrongly as it now does in upholding a puerile and unprofitable occupation. And a propoſal to exchange the uſual delights of the afternoon and evening for a pool at quadrille, and a rubber at whiſt, would have been received with the diſguſt which would, at preſent, attach on the adventurous reformer,

former, who ſhould recommend, when the card-tables are now ſet and the partners taking their places, to prefer liſtening to the page of Robertſon to practiſing the rules of Hoyle. "Man," it has been well obſerved, "is a bundle of habits." Life is made up of principles and actions familiariſed and confirmed by cuſtom. The uncouth faſhions in dreſs and perſonal demeanour, the ſenſeleſs decorations in building and in furniture, which have univerſally prevailed in different periods, and the moſt unnatural modes of ornamenting nature which have had poliſhed nations for their admirers from the days of Pliny to thoſe of George the ſecond, ſhew, with numberleſs other inſtances which might be particularized, that there is nothing ſo abſurd and extravagant which the eye cannot by uſe convert into a beauty, and the mind into a gratification. Nor is there any employment ſo trifling, that it cannot be rendered, by uniform practice, neceſſary to comfort. Were a family to be long accuſtomed, with the ſame regula-

regularity with which many dedicate a portion of the day to cards, to amuſe themſelves during ſome hours of every evening in picking and meaſuring ſtraws from wheat-ſheaves, placed before each individual for that purpoſe; an interruption of the cuſtom would be felt at firſt as a loſs of one of the eſſential enjoyments of life, and would leave, for a time, a vacancy ſcarcely to be ſupplied. Hence appears the importance of guarding in the outſet againſt contracting a habit ſo encroaching. The firſt links are imperceptible; but the chain, once formed, is ſcarcely to be broken.

As the recreation of the old and the infirm, at times when the mind is too weak or too much fatigued to receive pleaſure from a cheerful book or cheerful diſcourſe, cards occaſionally have their uſe. "And is this," the indignant votary of the card-table exclaims, "the only "merit to be aſcribed to them?" I would not unfairly detract even from any ſuppoſed

poſed merit which they may poſſeſs. It is poſſible that they may have their uſe in providing employment for the motley groupes which are ſometimes aſſembled together at the party of a lady of faſhion. It is expected, no doubt, that a large majority of the perſons collected on ſuch occaſions will neither be qualified to join in rational and entertaining converſation, nor capable of liſtening with ſatisfaction to thoſe who thus converſe; and preparations are made accordingly. The kindneſs of the intention, and the ſagacity of the contrivance, merit praiſe. But let the healthy be tender of encroaching on the remedies provided for the ſick. In an age which is not exempt from the charge of undervaluing diſtinctions eſtabliſhed for the benefit of ſociety, let proper deference be ſhewn to a regulation, which muſt be deemed intended to diſcriminate mental incapacity from communicative intelligence. Cards too are celebrated for their efficacy in enlivening the dulneſs of a country viſit. When the dinner, and the

deſſert, and the tea-table, have exhauſted their gratifications; when the elegance of the drawing-room has been admired in detail, and the proſpect from the windows can no longer be diſcerned; when the parrot and the lap-dog have been praiſed, till invention can ſupply no additional terms of eulogium; when each lady has already treaſured in her mind every item of the dreſs of every other, but is obliged to ſuſpend her criticiſms until the departure of the object of them: what reſource, we are aſked, what poſſible occupation remains, except cards? To the unfurniſhed mind, none.

The apology which is ſometimes made for the general introduction of cards, namely, that they prevent converſation from degenerating into ſlander and themes of ſcandal, is a vindication which was not to have been expected from the mouth of a perſon of the female ſex, nor from the mouth of any individual accuſtomed to regard that ſex with eſteem. It is, perhaps,

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one of the moſt pointed ſarcaſms that could have been directed againſt thoſe perſons in whoſe behalf it is alleged. Are we to have ſuch an opinion of feminine juſtice, benevolence, delicacy, and candour, as to conclude that women cannot paſs a ſingle evening otherwiſe than in the indulgence of detraction, unleſs their thoughts be occupied by the card-table: that their tongues, unleſs charmed to ſilence by attention to the game, will be inceſſantly exerciſed by calumny and malice? She of whom this repreſentation can with truth be given, has no time to throw away upon trifles. Objects of higher moment than viſits and amuſements claim her undivided care; retirement, reflection, ſelf-knowledge, the acquiſition of Chriſtian principles, the purification of a corrupted heart.

Though ſome few individuals of the female ſex may be obſerved to take their places among ſportſmen in the field; the faſhion, happily, is not ſo prevalent as to entitle fox-hunting, and ſimilar occupations,

tions, to rank among feminine amuſements. It is not, perhaps, in common caſes ſelf-evident, that diverſions which conſiſt in inflicting torture, and ſhedding blood, are altogether adapted even to perſons of the other ſex, who lay claim to cultivated underſtandings. But, however that may be, the rude clamour, the boiſterous exertions, and the cruel ſpectacles of field ſports, are wholly diſcordant, when contraſted with the delicacy, the refinement, and the ſenſibility of a woman.

The reflections, which have hitherto been offered on the ſubject of amuſements, have left unnoticed a material circumſtance operating more powerfully in the caſe of ſome amuſements, than in that of others; yet, in a certain meaſure, common to all. The inquiry has, in each inſtance, been almoſt excluſively directed to aſcertain, whether the amuſement ſpecified was, in its nature and circumſtances, innocent. But there is a danger which is attached even to innocent amuſements; the danger of purſuing them to exceſs. A poſſeſſion which we have al-

ways in our hands, which every perſon around us appears to have equally with ourſelves, is a poſſeſſion of the value of which we are moſt likely to be ignorant or regardleſs. Such a poſſeſſion is time. Men, who are ſtimulated to intellectual exertions by the concurrence of various motives, either unknown to the female ſex, or known only in an inferior degree; men, to whom buſineſs is in one ſhape or in another continually preſenting itſelf; whom the capacity of attaining to profeſſional honour and emolument, and the attractions of the field of literature, of which, until of late years, they have almoſt enjoyed a monopoly, might tempt to cultivate their underſtandings, and to apply their talents to purpoſes of utility; frequently conſign themſelves to a laborious life of amuſement; a life which, even if all their modes of amuſement had been in themſelves irreproachable, would not have been more uſeful and reſpectable than an equal period of obſtinate inactivity. Devoting their mornings to the billiard-room, and their evenings to the gaming-table; occupied in

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ſuperintending the training of race-horſes, and in witneſſing, with unfeeling delight, their exertions on the courſe; or employed in the unremitting purſuit and deſtruction of various parts of the animal world; they live without reflection on the great objects of human exiſtence, neither benefited by its progreſs, nor preparing for its termination. A picture ſimilar to this in its outline and compoſition, though differing in the particular objects preſented to the eye of the ſpectator, might be drawn from female life. Gay, elegant, and accompliſhed, but thoughtleſs, immerſed in trifles, and hurrying with impatience, never ſatisfied, from one ſcene of diverſion to another; how many women are ſeen floating down the ſtream of life, like bubbles on which the ſun paints a thouſand gaudy colours; and like bubbles vaniſhing, ſooner or later, one after another, and leaving no trace of uſefulneſs behind! They do not, like bubbles, vaniſh for ever; but after death muſt awake from the infatuated dream of idleneſs and diſſipation, to render an account of waſted

time and talents to an Almighty Judge. The ſcriptural cenſure of thoſe who are "lovers of pleaſure more than lovers of "God (*o*)," a cenſure, the proper force of which may be eſtimated by attending to the other characters included in the ſame catalogue by the Apoſtle, pertains not to thoſe perſons only who indulge themſelves in gratifications in their own nature criminal. It belongs in due proportion to all who ſacrifice duty to pleaſure; to all who elevate amuſements above the rank which they ought to hold in the mind of a Chriſtian; to all who addict themſelves to the purſuit of entertainment with an ardour, or to an extent, which ſo intrudes on their attention and their time, as to prevent them from improving their underſtandings, cultivating piety and benevolence of heart, and diſcharging the relative duties of life, with diligence and fidelity; to all, in other words, who, whatever may be the nature of their amuſements, follow them,

(*o*) 2 Tim. iii. 4.—See alſo ſome of the preceding and of the ſubſequent verſes.

or

or any one of them, to exceſs. So diſpoſed is the human mind to open itſelf to pleaſurable impreſſions, that at all times until age or ſorrow has deſtroyed the reliſh for amuſements, and above all other times, during the ſuſceptibility of youth, exceſs is to be apprehended. What has delighted us once, we feel aſſured will delight us again. And though the trial ſhould terminate in diſappointment, or repetition ſhould convert ſatisfaction into wearineſs; we ſeek to fill up the void, not by ſearching after pleaſures of a higher nature, but by eagerly catching at gratifications ſimilar to that, the deluſive nature of which we have ſo lately experienced. The very circumſtance of an amuſement being innocent, renders its attractions the more likely to acquire unreaſonable power over the unſuſpecting breaſt of ſimplicity. It excites no alarm: it has no features of deformity: the time which it occupies is ſpeedily gone, and leaves no diſagreeable recollection. It may be long before a young woman is led to diſcern, in her own caſe, that an action individually

blameleſs may, by frequency, become criminal; and to perceive the deficiency of what ſhe has done in the line of improvement and utility by conſidering what ſhe might have done.

Among the unhappy effects which attend an immoderate and confirmed thirſt for amuſements, this is one of the moſt lamentable; that the malady is fitly ranked among the mental diſorders moſt difficult to cure. Like the dropſy, it is diſtinguiſhed by a burning deſire for the indulgences moſt adverſe to the diminution of the complaint; a deſire ſo intenſe as ſcarcely to permit the ſufferer to advert to any other object. The mind, unaccuſtomed to ſerious reflection, ſoftened and enfeebled by relaxing habits, turns with diſguſt from argument and intelligence, clings to the trifles in which it has long delighted, and is almoſt incapable for a time of either ſeeking or of receiving gratification from better purſuits. The ſelf-denial, the painful efforts requiſite to break the ſhackles of habit, are fully known

known to thoſe only, by whom the ſhackles of habit have been broken. Let every woman beware of being imperceptibly betrayed into fetters from which, without ſuch ſelf-denial, ſuch painful efforts, ſhe cannot be extricated; yet from which it is neceſſary that ſhe ſhould be extricated, if ſhe is to lead a life uſeful to others, ultimately comfortable to herſelf, and calculated to obtain the approbation of Heaven.

The riſk to which a young woman is expoſed of contracting a habit of exceſſive fondneſs for amuſements, depends not only on the particular propenſities of her mind, but alſo on the place and ſituation in which ſhe principally reſides. To the daughter of a country gentleman, though her heart ſhould be fixed on company and diverſions, the paternal manſion, inſulated in its park, or admitting no contiguous habitations except the neighbouring hamlet, ſeldom furniſhes the opportunity of acceſs to a perpetual circle of amuſements. Viſitors are not always to be found in the drawing-

room; the card-table cannot always be filled up; the county town affords a ball but once in a month; and domeſtic circumſtances perverſely ariſe to obſtruct regularity of attendance. Suppoſe then a young woman thus ſituated to labour under the heavy diſadvantage of not having had her mind directed by education to proper objects. Finding herſelf obliged to procure, by her own efforts, the entertainment which ſhe is frequently without the means of obtaining from others, ſhe is excited to ſome degree of uſeful exertion. Family converſation, needle-work, a book, even a book that is not a novel, in a word, any occupation is found preferable to the tediouſneſs of a conſtant want of employment. Thus the foundation of ſome domeſtic habits is laid: or, if the habits were previouſly in exiſtence, they are ſtrengthened, or at leaſt are preſerved from being obliterated. She who is fixed in a country town, where ſociety is always within reach, and ſomething in the way of petty amuſement is ever going forward, or may eaſily be

be ſet on foot, may, with greater facility, contract a habit of flying from a companion, who, if inſipid and unpleaſing to her, will be, of all companions, the moſt inſipid and unpleaſing, herſelf. But it is in the metropolis that amuſements, and all the temptations which flow from amuſements, are concentered. So various are the ſcenes of public diverſion, ſo various the parties of private entertainment, which London affords in the evening; ſo numerous are the ſpectacles and exhibitions of wonders in nature or in art, and the attractive occupations properly to be claſſed under the head of amuſement, which obtrude on the leiſure of morning in the capital and its environs; ſo magnetic is the example of wealth, and rank, and faſhion, that ſhe who approaches the ſtream with a mind unſteadied by thoſe principles of moderation and ſobriety which are eſſential to the Chriſtian character, will probably be hurried away far from her proper courſe, or even ſucked into the vortex, and whirled, day after day, and year after year, in a never-ending round of giddineſs and diſſipation.

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If the metropolis be the ſpot in which the danger of becoming abſorbed in amuſements is moſt formidable; the ſcenes of reſort, whether inland or on the ſea-coaſt, which are diſtinguiſhed by the general denomination of Public Places, exhibit it in a degree but little inferior. Of ſuch places, the predominant ſpirit is thoughtleſſneſs. And thoughtleſſneſs, ever weary of its own vacuity, flies with reſtleſs ardour from diverſion to diverſion; and ſtimulates the inherent love of entertainment, which, in moſt perſons, requires rather to be moderated than to be inflamed. The contagion ſpreads, in the firſt place, among thoſe whoſe preſence is owing to other cauſes than ſickneſs: but, in a ſhort time, it extends to many perſons who are come in queſt of health; and often affects them ſo powerfully, that the hurry of the evening more than counterbalances the ſalubrious influence of air and of waters. Let it be remembered, however, that there is no place which affords an exemption from the obligation of rational purſuits and mental improvement; nor any place which does not afford opportunities for rational purſuits

purſuits and mental improvement to thoſe who are inclined to make uſe of them.

The true ſecret of happineſs is to learn to place delight in the performance of duty. This temper, the temper of a genuine Chriſtian, repreſſes, in proportion as it is acquired, the feveriſh thirſt for amuſements. Motives which addreſs themſelves to the underſtanding may check it occaſionally and partially: this goes to the ſource of the evil, by fixing the remedy in the heart.

CHAP. X.

ON THE EMPLOYMENT OF TIME.

TIME is a ſacred truſt conſigned to us by the Creator of the univerſe. To uſe it well is a leſſon, which duty and intereſt concur to ſuggeſt. The duration of the period to be confided to our management, though predetermined from the beginning in the counſels of Omniſcience, is undiſcloſed to the individual concerned, and is placed beyond the reach of every principle of calculation; that ignorance and uncertainty reſpecting the future may operate as a continual and powerful admonition wiſely to employ the preſent hour. The paſſing moment, incapable of being recalled, and if once waſted, waſted for ever, reiterates the admonition. Would you perceive, even now, in their true colours the ingratitude and the folly of ſquandering ſo precious a depoſit? Reflect on

on the gracious purpoſes, for the accompliſhment of which it is committed to you. Reflect how plainly incompatible a habit of ſquandering it is, with the frame of mind which is the fruit of Chriſtianity. Reflect on the infinite importance which you will hereafter attach to time paſt, when the conſequences flowing from the right or the wrong uſe of it will be diſcerned and felt by you in their full extent.

To occupy the mind with uſeful employments is among the beſt methods of guarding it from ſurrendering itſelf to diſſipation. To occupy it with ſuch employments regularly, is among the beſt methods of leading it to love them. Young women ſometimes complain, and more frequently the complaint is made for them, that they have nothing to do. Yet few complaints are urged with leſs foundation. To preſcribe to a young perſon of the female ſex the preciſe occupations to which ſhe ſhould devote her time, is impoſſible. It would be to attempt to limit, by inapplicable rules,

rules, what muſt vary according to circumſtances which cannot previouſly be aſcertained. Differences in point of health, of intellect, of taſte, and a thouſand nameleſs particularities of family occurrences and local ſituation, claim, in each individual caſe, to be taken into the account. Some general reflections, however, may be offered.

I advert not yet to the occupations which flow from the duties of matrimonial life. When, to the rational employments open to all women, the entire ſuperintendence of domeſtic œconomy is added; when parental cares and duties preſs forward to aſſume the high rank in a mother's breaſt to which they are entitled; to complain of the difficulty of finding proper methods of occupying time, would be a lamentation which nothing but politeneſs could preſerve from being received by the auditor with a ſmile. But in what manner, I hear it replied, are they, who are not wives and mothers, to buſy themſelves? Even at preſent young

women

women in general, notwithſtanding all their efforts to quicken and enliven the ſlow-paced hours, appear, if we may judge from their countenances and their language, not unfrequently to feel themſelves unſucceſsful. If dreſs then, and what is called diſſipation, are not to be allowed to fill ſo large a ſpace in the courſe of female life as they now overſpread; and your deſire extremely to curtail them in the exerciſe of this branch of their eſtabliſhed prerogative is, by no means, equivocal; how are well-bred women to ſupport themſelves in the ſingle ſtate through the diſmal vacuity that ſeems to await them? This queſtion it may be ſufficient to anſwer by another. If young and well-bred women are not accuſtomed, in their ſingle ſtate, regularly to aſſign a large proportion of their hours to ſerious and inſtructive occupations; what proſpect, what hope is there, that, when married, they will aſſume habits to which they have ever been ſtrangers, and exchange idleneſs and volatility for ſteadineſs and exertion?

To

To every woman, whether ſingle or married, the habit of regularly allotting to improving books a portion of each day, and, as far as may be practicable, at ſtated hours, cannot be too ſtrongly recommended. I uſe the term *improving* in a large ſenſe; as comprehending whatever writings may contribute to her virtue, her uſefulneſs, and her innocent ſatisfaction, to her happineſs in this world and in the next. She who believes that ſhe is to ſurvive in another ſtate of being through eternity, and is duly impreſſed by the awful conviction, will fix day by day her moſt ſerious thoughts on the inheritance to which ſhe aſpires. Where her treaſure is, there will her heart be alſo. She will not be ſeduced from an habitual ſtudy of the Holy Scriptures, and of other works calculated to imprint on her boſom the comparatively ſmall importance of the pains and pleaſures of this period of exiſtence; and to fill her with that knowledge, and inſpire her with thoſe views and diſpoſitions, which may lead her to delight in the preſent ſervice of her Maker,

and enable her to rejoice in the contemplation of futurity. With the time allotted to the regular perusal of the word of God, and of performances which inculcate the principles and enforce and illustrate the rules of Christian duty, no other kind of reading ought to be permitted to interfere. At other parts of the day let history, biography, poetry, or some of the various branches of elegant and profitable knowledge, pay their tribute of instruction and amusement. But let her studies be confined within the strictest limits of purity. Let whatever she peruses in her most private hours be such as she needs not to be ashamed of reading aloud to those, whose good opinion she is most anxious to deserve. Let her remember that there is an all-seeing eye, which is ever fixed upon her, even in her closest retirement. Let her not indulge herself in the frequent perusal of writings, however interesting in their nature, however eminent in a literary point of view, which are likely to inflame pride, and to inspire false notions of generosity,

of feeling, of ſpirit, or of any other quality deemed to contribute to excellence of character. Such unhappily are the effects to be apprehended from the works even of ſeveral of our diſtinguiſhed writers, in proſe or in verſe. And let her accuſtom herſelf regularly to bring the ſentiments which ſhe reads, and the conduct which is deſcribed in terms, more or leſs ſtrong, of applauſe and recommendation, to the teſt of Chriſtian principles. In proportion as this practice is purſued or neglected, reading will be profitable, or the reverſe.

There is one ſpecies of writings which obtains from a conſiderable proportion of the female ſex a reception much more favourable than is accorded to other kinds of compoſition more worthy of encouragement. It is ſcarcely neceſſary to add the name of novels and of romances. Works of this nature not unfrequently deſerve the praiſe of ingenuity of plan and contrivance, of accurate and well ſupported diſcrimination of character, and of force and elegance

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of language. Some of them have profeſſedly been compoſed with a deſign to favour the intereſts of morality. And among thoſe which are deemed to have on the whole a moral tendency, a very few perhaps might be ſelected, which are not liable to the diſgraceful charge of being contaminated occaſionally by incidents and paſſages unfit to be preſented to the reader. This charge, however, may ſo very generally be alleged with juſtice, that even of the novels which poſſeſs high and eſtabliſhed reputation, by far the greater number is totally improper, in conſequence of ſuch admixture, to be peruſed by the eye of delicacy. Poor indeed are the ſervices rendered to virtue by a writer, however he may boaſt that the object of his performance is to exhibit the vicious as infamous and unhappy, who, in tracing the progreſs of vice to infamy and unhappineſs, introduces the reader to ſcenes and language adapted to wear away the quick feelings of modeſty, which form at once the ornament and the ſafeguard of innocence; and like the bloom upon a plumb,

if once effaced, commonly diſappear for ever. To indulge in a practice of reading novels is, in ſeveral other particulars, liable to produce miſchievous effects. Such compoſitions are, to moſt perſons, extremely engaging. That ſtory muſt be ſingularly barren, or wretchedly told, of which, after having heard the beginning, we deſire not to know the end. To the pleaſure of learning the ultimate fortunes of the heroes and heroines of the tale, the novel commonly adds, in a greater or in a leſs degree, that which ariſes from animated deſcription, from lively dialogue, or from intereſting ſentiment. Hence the peruſal of one publication of this claſs leads, with much more frequency than is the caſe with reſpect to works of other kinds, (except perhaps of dramatic writings, to which moſt of the preſent remarks may be transferred,) to the ſpeedy peruſal of another. Thus a habit is formed, a habit at firſt, perhaps, of limited indulgence, but a habit that is continually found more formidable and more encroaching. The appetite becomes too keen to

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be denied: and in proportion as it is more urgent, grows leſs nice and ſelect in its fare. What would formerly have given offence, now gives none. The palate is vitiated or made dull. The produce of the book-club, and the contents of the circulating library, are devoured with indiſcriminate and inſatiable avidity (*a*). Hence the mind is ſecretly corrupted. Let it be obſerved too, that in exact correſpondence with the increaſe of a paſſion for reading novels, an averſion to reading of a more improving nature will gather ſtrength. Even in the claſs of novels leaſt objectionable in point of delicacy, falſe

(*a*) Of the books provided by moſt of the Circulating Libraries now ſo generally eſtabliſhed, the principal part conſiſts of novels: and the paſſion for that ſpecies of reading may almoſt univerſally be gratified at a trifling expence. The miſchief done is extreme; and its worſt effects are on the female mind. Book-clubs, which under regulations ſufficiently ſtrict may be the means of conveniently obtaining much pleaſure and inſtruction, are frequently contaminated by publications breathing the contagion of folly and vice. Theſe books travel in routine from houſe to houſe, obtrude themſelves on thoſe who would not have ſought for them, and ſeldom depart unperuſed.

ſentiment unfitting the mind for ſober life, applauſe and cenſure diſtributed amiſs, morality eſtimated by an erroneous ſtandard, and the capricious laws and empty ſanctions of honour ſet up in the place of religion, are the leſſons uſually preſented. There is yet another conſequence too important to be overlooked. The cataſtrophe and the incidents of theſe fictitious narratives commonly turn on the viciſſitudes and effects of a paſſion the moſt powerful of all thoſe, which agitate the human heart. Hence the ſtudy of them frequently creates a ſuſceptibility of impreſſion, and a premature warmth of tender emotions, which, not to ſpeak of other poſſible effects, have been known to betray young women into a ſudden attachment to perſons unworthy of their affection, and thus to hurry them into marriages terminating in unhappineſs.

In addition to the regular habit of uſeful reading, the cuſtom of committing to the memory ſelect and ample portions of poetic compo-

compoſitions, not for the purpoſe of oſtentatiouſly quoting them in mixed company, but for the ſake of private improvement, deſerves, in conſequence of its beneficial tendency, to be mentioned with a very high degree of praiſe. The mind is thus ſtored with a laſting treaſure of ſentiments and ideas, combined by writers of tranſcendent genius and vigorous imagination; clothed in appropriate, nervous, and glowing language; and impreſſed by the powers of cadence and harmony. Let the poetry, however, be well choſen. Let it be ſuch as elevates the heart with the ardour of devotion; adds energy and grace to precepts of morality; kindles benevolence by pathetic narrative and reflection; enters with accurate and lively deſcription into the varieties of character; or preſents vivid pictures of what is grand or beautiful in the ſcenery of nature. Such are, in general, the works of Milton, of Thomſon, of Gray, of Maſon, of Beattie, and of Cowper. It is thus that the beauty and grandeur of nature will be contemplated with new pleaſure. It is thus that taſte will be called forth, exerciſed,

and corrected. It is thus that judgement will be ſtrengthened, virtuous emotions cheriſhed, piety animated and exalted. At all times, and under every circumſtance, the heart, penetrated with religion, will delight itſelf in the recollection of paſſages, which diſplay the perfections of that Being on whom it truſts, and the glorious hopes to the accompliſhment of which it humbly looks forward. When affliction weighs down the ſpirits, or ſickneſs the ſtrength, it is then that the cheering influence of that recollection will be doubly felt. When old age, diſabling the ſufferer from the frequent uſe of books obliges the mind to turn inward upon itſelf; the memory, long retentive, even in its decay, of the acquiſitions which it had attained and valued in its early vigour, ſtill ſuggeſts the lines which have again and again diffuſed rapture through the boſom of health, and are yet capable of overſpreading the hours of decrepitude and the couch of pain with conſolation.

But it is not from books alone that a conſiderate young woman is to ſeek her improve-

improvement and her gratifications. The diſcharge of relative duties, and the exerciſe of benevolence, form additional ſources of activity and enjoyment. To give delight in the affectionate intercourſe of domeſtic ſociety; to relieve a parent in the ſuperintendence of family affairs; to ſmooth the bed of ſickneſs, and cheer the decline of age; to examine into the wants and diſtreſſes of the female inhabitants of the neighbourhood; to promote uſeful inſtitutions for the comfort of mothers, and for the inſtruction of children; and to give to thoſe inſtitutions that degree of attention, which, without requiring either much time or much perſonal trouble, will facilitate their eſtabliſhment and extend their uſefulneſs: theſe are employments congenial to female ſympathy; employments in the preciſe line of female duty; employments which diffuſe genuine and laſting conſolation among thoſe whom they are deſigned to benefit, and never fail to meliorate the heart of her who is engaged in them.

In pointing out what ought to be done, let juſtice be rendered to what has been done. In the diſcharge of the domeſtic offices of kindneſs, and in the exerciſe of charitable and friendly regard to the neighbouring poor, women in general are exemplary. In the latter branch of Chriſtian virtue, an acceſſion of energy has been witneſſed within a few years. Many ladies have ſhewn, and ſtill continue to ſhew, their earneſt ſolicitude for the welfare of the wretched and the ignorant, by ſpontaneouſly eſtabliſhing ſchools of induſtry and of religious inſtruction; and with a ſtill more beneficial warmth of benevolence, have taken the regular inſpection of them upon themſelves. May they ſtedfaſtly perſevere, and be imitated by numbers!

Among the employments of time, which, though regarded with due attention by many young women, are more or leſs neglected by a conſiderable number, moderate exerciſe in the open air claims to be noticed, Sedentary confinement in hot apartments on the

the one hand, and public diverſions frequented, on the other, in buildings ſtill more crowded and ſtifling, are often permitted ſo to occupy the time as by degrees even to wear away the reliſh for the freſhneſs of a pure atmoſphere, for the beauties and amuſements of the garden, and for thoſe "rural ſights and rural ſounds," which delight the mind uncorrupted by idleneſs, folly, or vice. Enfeebled health, a capricious temper, low and irritable ſpirits, and the loſs of many pure and continually recurring enjoyments, are among the conſequences of ſuch miſconduct.

But though books obtain their reaſonable portion of the day, though health has been conſulted, the demands of immediate duty fulfilled, and the dictates of benevolence obeyed, there will yet be hours remaining unoccupied; hours for which no ſpecific employment has yet been provided. For ſuch hours it is not the intention of theſe pages to preſcribe any ſpecific employment. What if ſome ſpace be aſſigned to the uſeful

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and elegant arts of female induſtry? But is induſtry to poſſeſs them all? Let the innocent amuſements which home furniſhes claim their ſhare. It is a claim which ſhall cheerfully be allowed. Do amuſements abroad offer their pretenſions? Neither ſhall they, on proper occaſions, be unheard. A well-regulated life will never know a vacuum ſufficient to require a large ſhare of public amuſements to fill it.

CHAP. XI.

CONSIDERATIONS ANTECEDENT TO MARRIAGE.

In the preceding pages, which have had an evident and primary reference to the ſituation of unmarried women, I have been under the neceſſity of ſpeaking largely concerning various duties, which appertain equally to thoſe who are no longer ſingle. I have to entreat the reader, if of the latter deſcription, ſtill to regard the foregoing part of this treatiſe as addreſſed alſo to herſelf; if of the former, to believe herſelf, even at preſent, concerned in many of the ſubſequent obſervations, though they ſhould ſeem to refer ſolely to a condition of life into which ſhe has not yet entered.

It will be proper, however, before the duties of a married woman are particulariſed,

lariſed, to be explicit concerning ſome points, on attention to which the probability of happineſs in matrimonal life radically depends.

The proſpect of paſſing a ſingle month with an acquaintance, whoſe ſociety we know to be unpleaſing, is a proſpect from which every mind recoils. Were the time of intercourſe antecedently fixed to extend to a year, or to a longer period, our repugnance would be proportionally great. Were the term to reach to the death of one of the parties, the evil would appear in foreſight ſcarcely to be endured. But further; let it be ſuppoſed, not only that the parties were to be bound during their joint lives to the ſociety of each other; but that their intereſts were to be inſeparably blended together in all circumſtances. And, in the next place, let it alſo be ſuppoſed that the two parties were not to engage in this aſſociation on terms of perfect equality; but that one of them was neceſſarily to be placed as to various parti-

particulars, in a ſtate of ſubordination to the other. What caution would be requiſite in each of the parties, what eſpecial caution would be requiſite in the party deſtined to ſubordination, antecedently to ſuch an engagment! How diverſified, how ſtrict, how perſevering ſhould be the inquiries of each reſpecting the other, and eſpecially of the latter reſpecting the former! Unleſs the diſpoſitions, the temper, the habits, the genuine character, and inmoſt principles were mutually known; what rational hope, what tolerable chance of happineſs could ſubſiſt? And if happineſs ſhould not be the lot of the two aſſociates, would not their diſquietudes be proportionate to the cloſeneſs of their union? Let this reaſoning be transferred to the caſe of marriage.

Whether marriage eſtabliſhes between the huſband and the wife a perfect equality of rights, or conveys to the former a certain degree of ſuperiority over the latter, is a point not left among Chriſtians to be

decided by ſpeculative arguments. The intimation of the divine will, communicated to the firſt woman immediately after the fall, is corroborated by various injunctions delivered in the New Teſtament. "Let the wife ſee that ſhe reverence her "huſband."—"Wives, ſubmit yourſelves "unto your own huſbands as unto the "Lord; for the huſband is the head of "the wife, even as Chriſt is the head of "the church;—therefore as the church is "ſubject unto Chriſt, ſo let the wives be to "their own huſbands in every thing (*o*)." The command in the ſecond of theſe paſſages is ſo explicit, and illuſtrated by a compariſon ſo impreſſive, that it is needleſs to recite other texts of a ſimilar import. The obedience, however, which is here enjoined by the Apoſtle, is not unlimited obedience. Were a huſband preſumptuouſly to require his wife to infringe the property or other rights of a third

(*o*) Epheſ. v. 33.—22. 24.—See alſo Coloſſ. iii. 18.—1 Cor. xiv. 34, 35.—1 Tim. ii. 11. 15.—Titus, ii. 5.—1 Peter, iii. 1.

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perſon, or to tranſgreſs any of the divine laws, ſhe would be bound to obey God rather than man. And it is very poſſible that he might be in other reſpects ſo unreaſonable and injurious in his injunctions, that ſhe might with juſtice conceive herſelf exempted, as to thoſe particular inſtances, from the obligation of implicit ſubmiſſion to his authority. St. Paul directs children to obey their parents, and ſervants their maſters, "in *all* things (*p*)." Yet it is manifeſt that his direction was not intended to reach to things ſinful, nor perhaps to other extreme caſes which might be deviſed. It is reaſonable, therefore, and it is alſo conformable to the general mode of conveying moral directions which is adopted in the Scriptures, to underſtand his ſtrong declaration concerning the authority of a huſband as limited by reſtrictions and exceptions, correſponding to thoſe with which his equally ſtrong declarations concerning the authority of parents and of maſters are manifeſtly to be

(*p*) Coloſſ. iii. 20. 22.

underſtood. But though in caſes ſuch as have been ſuppoſed the duty of female obedience is ſuſpended, it is ſuſpended in theſe only. She who is commanded to "be ſubject to her head, the huſband, as "the church is ſubject to Chriſt, its head," cannot reaſonably doubt that under all other circumſtances faithful and willing obedience is a branch of her connubial duty.

A branch of duty in its nature ſo important and extenſive, ought to be conſidered antecedently to marriage with religious ſcrupulouſneſs. And while the obligation is acknowledged, let not the ends for which it is impoſed be miſconceived. Let not pride or ignorance be for a moment permitted to ſuggeſt that the Father of the univerſe, in allotting obedience to the wife, has diſplayed a partial regard to the welfare and comfort of the huſband. Eternal wiſdom, incapable of error and of caprice, has in this diſpenſation conſulted her happineſs no leſs than that of her aſſociate. You admit that it was deſirable to

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prevent or to leſſen the bickerings, the conflicts, the pertinacious contrariety of plans and projects, which, in a ſtate imperfect as human nature is, would perpetually ariſe and involve families in unceaſing confuſion, were each party free from any obligation to acquieſce in the deciſion of the other. By what method then, were we to conſult the dictates of unbiaſſed judgement, ſhould we deem the object moſt likely to be attained? Undoubtedly by the method which Providence has adopted; by aſſigning to one of the partners in marriage a fixed pre-eminence over the other. If this point be once conceded, there cannot be room for much heſitation as to the only remaining queſtion: to which of the two parties would it be wiſeſt and beſt that the pre-eminence ſhould be aſſigned? It is on man that the burden of the moſt laborious offices in life, of thoſe offices which require the greateſt exertions, the deepeſt reflection, and the moſt comprehenſive judgement is devolved. Man, that he may be qualified for the diſ-

charge of theſe offices, has been furniſhed by his Creator with powers of inveſtigation and of foreſight in a ſomewhat larger meaſure than the other ſex, who have been recompenſed by an ample ſhare of mental endowments of a different kind. It ſeems therefore an appointment both reaſonable in its nature and moſt conducive to the happineſs, not only of the man himſelf, but of his wife, of his children, and of all his connections, that he ſhould be the perſon to whom the ſuperiority ſhould be committed. But Heaven has not left the wife deſtitute or neglected. Security is provided for her in various ways againſt an arbitrary and tyrannical exerciſe of power on the part of the huſband. Some limitations to which his authority is ſubjected have already been noticed. Theſe, if he deſerve the name of a Chriſtian, he well knows. He knows too, that if he be entruſted with power, he acts under a proportionate reſponſibility, that he acts under the all-ſeeing eye of his future Judge. And if the Scriptures are on the one hand expreſs

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in enjoining obedience to the wife; they are no leſs explicit on the other in reminding the huſband of the mildneſs, the conciliating forbearance, the lively and never-failing tenderneſs of affection, which every branch of his behaviour towards his partner ought to diſplay; and of the readineſs with which he ought to make large ſacrifices of perſonal inclination, eaſe, and intereſt, when eſſential to her permanent welfare. "Huſbands, love your wives, "and be not bitter againſt them (*q*)." "Ye "huſbands, dwell with your wives accord-"ing to knowledge; giving honour unto "the wife, as unto the weaker veſſel (*r*)." "Huſbands, love your wives, as Chriſt alſo "loved the Church, and gave himſelf for "it (*s*)." If a woman marry a perſon without having ſufficient reaſon to be ſatisfied, from actual knowledge of his character, that the commands of the Scriptures will decide his general conduct, the fault ſurely is her own.

(*q*) Coloſſ. iii. 19. (*r*) 1 Pet. iii. 7. (*s*) Epheſ. v. 25.

The foundation of the greater portion of the unhappineſs which clouds matrimonial life, is to be ſought in the unconcern ſo prevalent in the world, as to thoſe radical principles on which character and the permanence of character depend,—the principles of religion. Popular language indicates the ſtate of popular opinion. If an union about to take place, or recently contracted, between two young perſons, be mentioned in converſation; the firſt queſtion which we hear aſked concerning it is, whether it be *a good match*. The very countenance and voice of the inquirer, and of the anſwer, the terms of the anſwer returned, and the obſervations, whether expreſſive of ſatisfaction or of regret, which fall from the lips of the company preſent in the circle, all concur to ſhew what, in common eſtimation, is meant by being well married. If a young woman be deſcribed as thus married, the terms imply, that ſhe is united to a man whoſe ſtation and fortune are ſuch, when compared with her own or thoſe of her parents, that in point of precedence,

dence, in point of command of finery and of money, ſhe is, more or leſs, a gainer by the bargain. In high life they imply, that ſhe will now poſſeſs the enviable advantages of taking place of other ladies in the neighbourhood; of decking herſelf out with jewels and lace; of inhabiting ſplendid apartments; rolling in handſome carriages; gazing on numerous ſervants in gaudy liveries: and of going to London, and other faſhionable ſcenes of reſort, all in a degree ſomewhat higher than that in which a calculating broker, after poring on her pedigree, ſumming up her property in hand, and computing, at the market price, what is contingent or in reverſion, would have pronounced her entitled to them. A few ſlight and obvious alterations would adapt the picture to the middle claſſes of ſociety. But what do the terms imply as to the character of the man ſelected to be her huſband? Probably nothing. His character is a matter which ſeldom enters into the conſideration of the perſons who uſe them, unleſs it, at length, appears in the ſhape of

an-after-thought, or is awkwardly hitched into their remarks for the ſake of decorum. If the terms imply any thing on this point, they mean no more than that he is not ſcandalouſly and notoriouſly addicted to vice. He may be covetous, he may be proud, he may be ambitious, he may be malignant, he may be devoid of Chriſtian principles, practice, and belief; or, to ſay the very leaſt, it may be totally unknown whether he does not fall, in every particular, under this deſcription; and yet, in the language and in the opinion of the generality of both ſexes, the match is excellent. In like manner a diminution of power as to the ſuppoſed advantages already enumerated, though counterpoiſed by the acquiſition of a companion eminent for his virtues, is ſuppoſed to conſtitute a bad match; and is univerſally lamented in polite meetings with real or affected concern. The good or bad fortune of a young man in the choice of a wife is eſtimated according to the ſame rules.

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From thoſe who contract marriages, either chiefly, or in a conſiderable degree, through motives of intereſt or of ambition, it would be folly to expect previous ſolicitude reſpecting piety of heart. And it would be equal folly to expect that ſuch marriages, however they may anſwer the purpoſes of intereſt or of ambition, ſhould terminate otherwiſe than in wretchedneſs. Wealth may be ſecured; rank may be obtained: but if wealth and rank are to be main ingredients in the cup of matrimonial felicity, the pure and ſweet wine will be exhauſted at once, and nothing remain but bitter and corroſive dregs. When attachments are free from the contamination of ſuch unworthy motives, it by no means always follows that much attention is paid to intrinſic excellence of moral and religious character. Affection, quick-ſighted in diſcerning, and diligent in ſcrutiniſing, the minuteſt circumſtances which contribute to ſhew whether it is met with reciprocal ſincerity and ardor, is, in other reſpects, purblind and inconſiderate. It magnifies good qualities

qualities which exiſt; it ſeems to itſelf to perceive merits which, to other eyes, are inviſible; it gives credit for what it wiſhes to diſcover; it enquires not, where it fears a diſappointment. It forgets that the ſpirit of the ſcriptural command "not to be "yoked unequally with unbelievers," a command reiterated in other parts of holy writ, may juſtly be deemed to extend to all caſes, in which there is reaſon to apprehend that religion is not the great operative principle in the mind of the man. Yet on what grounds can a woman hope for the bleſſing of God on a marriage contracted without regard to his injunctions? What ſecurity can ſhe have for happineſs, as depending on the conduct of her huſband, if the only foundation on which confidence can be ſafely repoſed, be wanting? And ought ſhe not, in common prudence, to conſider it as wanting, until ſhe is thoroughly convinced of its exiſtence? He whoſe ruling principle is that of ſtedfaſt obedience to the laws of God, has a pledge to give, and it is a pledge worthy of being truſted,

truſted, that he will diſcharge his duty to his fellow-creatures, according to the different relations in which he may be placed. Every other bond of confidence is brittle as a thread, and looks ſpecious only to prove deluſive. A woman who receives for her huſband a perſon of whoſe moral and religious character ſhe knows no more than that it is outwardly decent, ſtakes her welfare upon a very hazardous experiment. She who marries a man not entitled even to that humble praiſe, in the hope of reclaiming him, ſtakes it on an experiment in which there is ſcarcely a chance of her ſucceſs.

Among various abſurd and miſchievous leſſons which young women were accuſtomed in the laſt age to learn from dramatic repreſentations, one of the moſt abſurd and miſchievous was this: that a man of vicious character was very eaſily reformed; and that he was particularly likely, when once reformed, to make a deſirable and exemplary huſband. At the concluſion of almoſt

almoſt every comedy the hero of the piece, ſignalized throughout its progreſs by qualities and conduct radically incompatible with the exiſtence of matrimonial happineſs, was introduced upon the ſtage as having experienced a ſudden change of heart, and become a convert, as by a miracle, to the ways of religion and virtue. The ſame prepoſterous reformation occaſionally finds a place in compoſitions of modern date. The reaſons which have induced many writers, by no means unſkilled in the ſcience of human nature, to conſtruct their dramas on a plan ſo unnatural, are evident. Following the bent of his own contaminated mind, or ſolicitous only to ſuit the taſte of a corrupted audience, the author conceived immorality ſeaſoned with wit to furniſh the moſt copious and attractive fund of entertainment. He formed his plot, drew his characters, and arranged his incidents, accordingly. His cataſtrophe was to turn on the uſual hinge, marriage. But though he had, without ſcruple, exhibited his hero through four entire acts, and

three

three quarters of the fifth, as unprincipled; yet in the final ſcene to unite him unprincipled as he was to the lady of his wiſhes, a lady to whom it had been found convenient to repreſent throughout the drama in a much more reſpectable light than her intended huſband, was an indecorum too flagrant to be hazarded. For form's ſake, therefore, it was neceſſary that a reformation, and through want of time that an inſtantaneous reformation, ſhould be ſuppoſed to be wrought in his heart. Let the female ſex be aſſured, that whenever on the ſtage of real life an irreligious and immoral young man is ſuddenly found, on the eve of matrimony, to change his external conduct, and to recommend himſelf by profeſſions of a determination to amend; the probability that the change is adopted, as in the theatre, for the ſake of form and convenience, and that it will not be durable after the purpoſes of form and convenience ſhall have been anſwered by it, is one of thoſe which approach the neareſt to certainty.

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The truths which have been inculcated as furniſhing the only foundation for rational hopes of happineſs in marriage are ſuch as ought to be eſtabliſhed in the mind, while the affections are yet unengaged. When the heart has received an impreſſion, reaſon acts feebly or treacherouſly. But let not the recent impreſſion be permitted to ſink deeper, ere the habitual principles and conduct of him who has made it ſhall have been aſcertained. On theſe points in particular, points which a young woman cannot herſelf poſſeſs adequate means of inveſtigating, let the advice and inquiries of virtuous relatives be ſolicited. Let not their opinions, though the purport of them ſhould prove unacceptable, be undervalued; nor their remonſtrances, if they ſhould remonſtrate, be conſtrued as unkindneſs. Let it be remembered that, although parental authority can never be juſtified in conſtraining a daughter to marry againſt her will; there are many caſes in which it may be juſtified in requiring her to pauſe. Let it be remembered that, if

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ſhe ſhould unite herſelf to a man who is not under the habitual influence of Chriſtianity, unſettled as to its principles, or careleſs as to ſome of its practical duties; ſhe has to dread not only the riſk of perſonal unhappineſs from his conduct towards her, but the dangerous contagion of intimate example. She has to dread that his irreligion may infect herſelf, his unſteadineſs may render her unſteady, his careleſſneſs may teach her to be careleſs. Does the ſcene appear in proſpect gloomy or ambiguous? Let her be wiſe, let her exert herſelf, before it be too late. It is better to encounter preſent anxiety, than to avoid it at the expence of greater and durable evils. And even if affection has already acquired ſuch force, as not to be repreſſed without very painful ſtruggles; let her be conſoled and animated by the conſciouſneſs that the ſacrifice is to prevent, while prevention is yet in her power, years of danger and of miſery; that it is an act not only of ultimate kindneſs to herſelf, but of duty to God; and that every act of humble

humble and perſevering duty may hope to receive, in a better world, a reward proportioned to the ſeverity of the trial.

In a union ſo intimate as that of matrimonial life thoſe diverſities in temper, habits, and inclinations, which in a leſs cloſe connection might not have been diſtinctly perceived, or would have attracted notice but ſeldom, unavoidably ſwell into importance. Hence, among the qualifications which influence the probability of connubial comfort, a general ſimilarity of diſpoſition between the two parties is one of eſpecial moment. Where ſtrong affection prevails, a ſpirit of accommodation will prevail alſo. But it is not deſirable that the ſpirit of accommodation ſhould be ſubjected to rigorous or very frequent experiments. Great diſparity in age between a huſband and a wife, or a wide difference in rank antecedently to marriage, is, on this account, liable to be productive of diſquietude. The ſprightlineſs of youth ſeems levity, and the ſobriety of maturer

years to be tinctured with moroſeneſs, when cloſely contraſted. A ſudden introduction to affluence, a ſudden and great elevation in the ſcale of ſociety, are apt to intoxicate; and a ſudden reduction in outward appearance to be felt as degrading. Inſtances, however, are not very rare in which the force of affection, of good ſenſe, and of good principles, ſhews itſelf permanently ſuperior to the influence of cauſes, which, to minds leſs happily attempered, and leſs under the guidance of religious motives, prove ſources of anxiety and vexation.

To delude a young man by encouraging his attentions for the pleaſure of exhibiting him as a conqueſt, for the purpoſe of exciting the aſſiduities of another perſon, or from any motive except the impulſe of mutual regard, is a proceeding too plainly repugnant to juſtice, and to delicacy of ſentiment, to require much obſervation. On ſuch ſubjects, even inadvertence is highly culpable. What, then, is the guilt of her,

who deliberately raiſes hopes which ſhe is reſolved not to fulfil?

There remains yet another caution relating to the preſent ſubject, which appears worthy of being ſuggeſted. A young woman, unbiaſſed by intereſted motives, is ſometimes led to contract a matrimonial engagement without ſuſpecting that ſhe perhaps does not entertain for her intended huſband the warm and rooted affection neceſſary for the conſervation of connubial happineſs. She beholds him with general approbation: ſhe is conſcious that there is no other perſon whom ſhe prefers to him: ſhe receives lively pleaſure from his attentions: and ſhe imagines that ſhe loves him with tenderneſs and ardour. Yet it is very poſſible that ſhe may be unacquainted with the real ſtate of her heart. Thoughtleſs inexperience, gentleneſs of diſpoſition, the quick ſuſceptibility of early youth, and chiefly perhaps the complacency which all perſons, whoſe affections are not pre-occupied, feel towards thoſe who diſtinguiſh

them by particular proofs of regard, may have excited an indiſtinct partiality which ſhe miſtakes for rivetted attachment. Many an unhappy wife has diſcovered the miſtake too late.

It is highly deſirable that a young woman as ſoon as ever ſhe receives particular attentions from an individual of the other ſex, ſhould communicate with perfect openneſs the circumſtance to her parents. And every young woman ought habitually to reflect, that her firſt object ſhould not be to be ſettled in matrimonial life, but to be prepared to do her duty in any ſituation in which Providence may deſign her to be placed.

CHAP. XII.

ON THE DUTIES OF MATRIMONIAL LIFE.

AMONG the moſt important of the duties peculiar to the ſituation of a married woman, are to be placed thoſe ariſing from the influence which ſhe will naturally poſſeſs over the conduct and character of her huſband. If it be ſcarcely poſſible for two perſons connected by the ties of common friendſhip, to live conſtantly together, or even habitually to paſs much time in the ſociety of each other, without gradually approaching nearer and nearer in their ſentiments and habits; ſtill leſs probable is it, that from the cloſeſt and moſt attractive of all bands of union a ſimilar effect ſhould not be the reſult. The effect will be experienced by both parties, and perhaps in an equal degree. But if it be felt by one in a greater

greater degree than by the other, it ſeems likely to be thus felt by the huſband. In female manners inſpired by affection, and bearing at once the ſtamp of modeſty and of good ſenſe, example operates with a captivating force which few boſoms can reſiſt. When the heart is won, the judgement is eaſily perſuaded. It waits not for the ſlow proceſs of argument to prove that to be right, which it already thinks too amiable to be wrong. To the faſcinating charms of female virtue, when adorned by its higheſt embelliſhment, diffidence, the Scriptures themſelves bear teſtimony. St. Peter, addreſſing himſelf to married women, ſome of whom, in thoſe days, had been converted to the Chriſtian religion, while their huſbands remained yet in idolatry, ſpeaks in the following terms: "Likewiſe, ye wives, be in ſubjection to "your own huſbands; that if any obey "not the word, they alſo, without the "word, may be won by the converſation "of the wives; while they behold your

" chaſte converſation coupled with fear (*t*)." To every woman who, in modern times, is unhappy enough to have a huſband ignorant of the evidence, unconvinced of the truth, regardleſs of the precepts, or deſtitute of the genuine ſpirit of Chriſtianity, this direction of the Apoſtle indicates an object which ought to be among the neareſt to her heart; and at the ſame time deſcribes, with an accurate inſight into the nature of the human mind, the methods from which, under the ſuperintending control of Providence, the attainment of it is to be expected. But it ſpeaks to married women univerſally. To every one who diſcerns in the behaviour of her huſband a habit of deviation, in any reſpect, from the path of Chriſtian rectitude, it ſpeaks the language of inſtruction and of encouragement. If the example of a wife endearing herſelf to her huſband by " chaſte converſation," by purity of manners and of conduct, " coupled with fear,"

(*t*) 1 Peter, iii. 1, 2.

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united with modeſt reſpect and unaſſuming mildneſs, would be thus efficacious in reclaiming a perſon immerſed in the darkneſs and the immoralities of Paganiſm; ſhall it now be without power to detach him, who daily beholds it from ſmaller errors? Shall not the divine bleſſing, which heretofore enabled it to do ſo much, enable it now to do what is leſs? Its power is neither diminiſhed, nor forſaken of the divine bleſſing. It labours in ſecrecy and ſilence, unobtruſive and unſeen. But it is, at this hour, performing its part throughout every quarter of the Chriſtian world, in weaning from prejudices, in diſſuading from vice, in fixing the wavering, in ſoftening the obdurate, in rendering virtue and holineſs beloved, in diffuſing peace and happineſs, and in preparing thoſe on whom it operates for higher felicity hereafter. Women appear to be, on the whole, more diſpoſed to religious conſiderations than men. They have minds more ſuſceptible of lively impreſſions, which religion is pre-eminent in producing. They are leſs expoſed than the

other ſex to the temptations of groſs and open vice. They have quicker feelings of native delicacy, no inconſiderable ſupports to virtue. They are more eaſily excited to tenderneſs, benevolence, and ſympathy. And they are ſubjected, in a peculiar degree, to viciſſitudes of health adapted to awaken ſerious thought, and to ſet before them the proſpect and the conſequences of diſſolution. The ſteady glow of piety excited in the mind of the wife has, in numberleſs inſtances, diffuſed itſelf through the breaſt of the huſband. And in no inſtances has it diffuſed itſelf through his breaſt, without adding to the warmth of connubial affection.

But never let it be forgotten that female example, if it be thus capable of befriending the cauſe of religion and the intereſts of moral rectitude, is equally capable of proving itſelf one of the moſt dangerous of their foes. We are all prone to copy a model, though a faulty model, which is continually before us. When the perſons

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by whom it is exhibited are indifferent to us, we yet conform to it imperceptibly; when they are eſteemed and loved, we are enſnared into imitation even with open eyes. She who, at preſent, has no piety of heart, or ſo far miſtakes the eſſence of Chriſtian piety as to regard it as a matter but of ſecondary importance, knows not whether ſhe ſhall not have to anſwer at the day of retribution for having betrayed her huſband into a neglect of his eternal welfare. She who ſets the pattern of ſlighting one Chriſtian ordinance, of diſobeying one Chriſtian precept, contributes not only to lead her huſband into the ſame fault, but likewiſe to weaken his attachment to every other Chriſtian ordinance, and to impair the ſenſe which he entertains, be it more or leſs ſtrong, of the obligation and importance of the other precepts of the Goſpel. If you are little capable of being, in the moſt important points, a beneficial companion to your huſband, beware at leaſt of being a noxious aſſociate. If you are unable to forward his courſe in the path of virtue

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and religion; at leaſt beware that he be not impeded and miſled by failings borrowed from yourſelf. Be not however diſpoſed to conclude that your modeſt endeavours to promote his beſt intereſts are vain. "Be not weary in well-doing," nor deſpair. Perſevere in your exertions, for your huſband's ſake as well as for your own. Unavailing as they have hitherto proved, at a future period they may be rendered by the bleſſing of Providence ſucceſsful. Even now, unpromiſing as appearances may be, you may have ſown ſeed which, under the foſtering influence of reflection, of ſickneſs, and of ſorrow, may ſpring up and bear excellent fruit hereafter.

But, whatever be the influence which the amiable virtues of a wife may obtain over her huſband; let not the conſciouſneſs of it ever lead her to ſeek opportunities of diſplaying it, nor to cheriſh a wiſh to intrude into thoſe departments which belong not to her juriſdiction. Content with the province

province which reaſon and revelation have aſſigned to her, and ſedulous to fulfil, with cheerful alacrity, the duties which they preſcribe; let her equally guard againſt deſiring to poſſeſs undue weight over her huſband's conduct, and againſt exerciſing amiſs that which properly belongs to her. Let her remember too that the juſt regard, which has been acquired by artleſs attractions, may be loſt by unwarrantable and teaſing competition.

The love of power, congenial to the human breaſt, reveals itſelf into the two ſexes under different forms, but with equal force. Hence have ariſen the open endeavours ſometimes diſcernible on the part of wives of turbulent paſſions, and the oblique machinations viſible among others of a cunning turn of mind, to carry favourite points againſt the will of their huſbands. If we may give credit to the writers of comedy, and to the weekly or diurnal editors of periodical papers, at the end of the laſt century and early in the preſent, for accurate obſervation

vation and juſt deſcription of the manners of their contemporaries; the grand reſource, at that period, of a lady whoſe huſband was cruel enough to deny her any thing on which ſhe had ſet her heart, from a London journey to a piece of brocade, was to fall into an hyſteric. The reign of fits and vapours ſeems now to be cloſed. Let not the diſpoſitions, by which it was introduced and upheld, be found to ſurvive its fall. Let it ever be remembered, that ſhe who by teaſing, by wheedling, by fineſſe under any ſhape whatever, ſeeks to weary or to deceive her huſband into conſent or acquieſcence, acts no leſs plainly in oppoſition to her duty of ſcriptural obedience, than ſhe would have done had ſhe driven him into compliance by the menaces and weapons of an Amazon.

"I beſeech you," ſaid St. Paul to his Epheſian converts, "that ye walk worthy "the vocation wherewith ye are called; "with all lowlineſs and meekneſs, with "long-ſuffering, forbearing one another in "love;

"love; endeavouring to keep the unity of "the ſpirit in the bond of peace (*u*)." This earneſt and affectionate advice, though originally referring to the general condition and manner of life to which Chriſtians are called, has a propriety ſingularly appoſite when applied to the ſtate of marriage. Let every married woman regard the admonition as though it had been pronounced by the Apoſtle ſpecially for her ſake.

To preſerve unimpaired the affections of her aſſociate, to convince him that, in his judgement of her character formed antecedently to marriage, he was neither blinded by partiality, nor deluded by artifice, will be the uniform ſtudy of every woman who conſults her own happineſs and the rules of Chriſtian duty. The ſtrongeſt attachment will decline, if it ſuſpect that it is received with diminiſhed warmth. And the ſuſpicion will preſent itſelf to the mind of a huſband, who ſees not in the behaviour of

(*u*) Epheſ. iv. 1—3.

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his wife a continuance of that ſolicitude to render herſelf pleaſing to him, which he had experienced at the commencement of their union. The advice which has been publickly and ſeriouſly given, that a married woman ſhould ever conceal with care from her huſband the extent of her affection for him, is happily too abſurd to gain many converts among women who really love thoſe to whom they are united; and too difficult to be frequently put in practice by wives of that deſcription, ſhould they blindly deſire to follow it.

Next to the attractions of virtue, the qualification which contributes, perhaps, more than any other to cheriſh the tender feelings of regard, and to eſtabliſh connubial happineſs, is good temper. It is indeed itſelf a virtue. As far as it is the mere gift of nature, it is not in ſtrictneſs entitled to that appellation. But as far as it reſults from cultivation and conſcientious vigilance, it has a claim to the honourable diſtinction. Some minds are originally imbued with an ampler

ampler ſhare of benevolence and kindneſs than has been infuſed into others. The difference is obvious, even in early childhood. Care however and exertion, founded on Chriſtian motives, and ſtrengthened by uniform habit, are able both to meliorate diſpoſitions already excellent, and to overcome the greateſt inherent defects. But if they on whom Providence, varying the ſources of moral probation in different individuals, has beſtowed ſweetneſs of temper with a ſparing hand, be not ſtrenuous and unremitting in their efforts to improve, under the divine bleſſing, the ſcanty ſtock; if, inſtead of conſidering a native failing as an intimation reſpecting the quarter on which it is their eſpecial duty to be on their guard, they convert it into an apology for captiouſneſs, peeviſhneſs, and violence; what but domeſtic miſery can be expected? A fretful woman is her own tormentor; but ſhe is alſo a torment to every one around her, and to none ſo much as to her huſband. No day, no hour is ſecure. No incident is ſo trifling, but it may be wrought up into a fa-

a family diſturbance. The Apoſtle's exclamation, "Behold, how great a matter "a little fire kindleth (*x*)," is in that houſe fully and continually exemplified. But the ſcene to which that exclamation is applicable, is not the ſchool of conjugal affection. "Let all bitterneſs, and wrath, and "anger, and clamour be put away." "It "is better to dwell in the wilderneſs, than "with a contentious and an angry woman." "It is better to dwell in a corner of the "houſe-top, than with a brawling woman "in a wide houſe (*y*)."

To "the ornament of a meek and quiet "ſpirit, which in the ſight of God is of "great price," and poſſeſſes an intrinſic charm to which the breaſt of man can ſcarcely be inſenſible, let there be added Diſcretion. The value of this quality in promoting and upholding matrimonial happineſs is ineſtimable. It is a quality which

(*x*) James, iii. 5.

(*y*) Epheſ. iv. 31. Prov. xxi. 19. xxv. 24.

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the Scriptures, as foreboding the frequent neglect of it, and the miſerable conſequences of that neglect, have not overlooked. St. Paul, in his Epiſtle to Titus, after having directed that young women ſhould be inſtructed "to be ſober, to love their huſ-"bands, to love their children," enjoins further that they ſhould be taught "to be "diſcreet (z)." Diſcretion is not one of thoſe virtues which come into practice only in ſingular conjunctures, under circumſtances which can happen ſeldom to the ſame individual, and to ſome perſons may never occur at all. It is not a robe of ſtate, to be drawn forth from its receſs on ſome day of feſtivity; or a ponderous cloak, to be put on to repel the violence of a thunder-ſhower. It is to the mind what the every day clothing is to the body, requiſite under every viciſſitude to health, and propriety, and comfort. Its ſphere embraces every ſeaſon and every incident of life. At home and abroad, in the city and in the country,

(z) Titus, ii. 5.

with intimates and with ſtrangers, in buſineſs and in leiſure, it is vigilant, and active, and unwearied. It enhances the utility of virtue, and anticipates the allurements of vice. It attends to perſons (*a*) and feelings, to times, occaſions, and ſituations; and "abſtains from all appearance of evil (*b*)." It is worthy of being inculcated with the more earneſtneſs on married women, becauſe they appear in ſeveral reſpects to be in greater danger than the ſingle of being led by cuſtom, or hurried by inadvertence, to diſregard it. Marriage, though to a certain degree a ſtate of reſtraint, is not unfrequently regarded as beſtowing ſome deſirable acceſſions of liberty. The giddy and the vain, ſecured by having already contracted an indiſſoluble engagement from the charge of being on the watch to obtain a ſettlement for life, and from the danger

(*a*) No advice could eaſily be more repugnant to diſcretion and common ſenſe, than that which has been given to women, by at leaſt one writer of eminence, ſtudiouſly to ſeek their friendſhips among perſons of the other ſex.

(*b*) 1 Theſſ. v. 22.

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of preventing themſelves from obtaining one, often indulge themſelves without concern in a freedom of manners, and a levity of converſation, from which the fear of incurring cenſure and exciting diſguſt had previouſly taught them to refrain. Plunging with augmented eagerneſs into the hurry of diſſipation, and little ſcrupulous as to the ſociety with which they tread the circle of amuſements; they take fire at each remonſtrance of a huſband as a reflection on their character, and feel the ſmalleſt obſtacle to the career of their pleaſures as an act of tyrannical control. Hence, while the wife, on the one hand, relies on the innocence of her intentions, and the huſband, on the other, has not to charge himſelf with unkindneſs or auſterity; the ſecret ſprings of diſquietude and grief, perhaps of indifference, of alienation of heart and of incurable diſſenſions, are already opened. Is the wife then innocent? Unqueſtionably not. Admit her giddineſs and her vanity, no trifling ſubjects of reprehenſion, no light deviations from Chriſtian ſober-

mindedneſs, to be deemed blameleſs: admit her manners and her converſation to have been clear from every imputation, except that of thoughtleſs imprudence: a heavy charge will yet remain. She has wounded the feelings of her huſband; ſhe has expoſed to riſk the warmth of his affection; ſhe has laid herſelf open to the inſinuations of calumny; ſhe has exhibited a dangerous example; ſhe has trodden a moſt dangerous path; ſhe has hazarded her own happineſs, and that of the perſon moſt dear to her, by a neglect of Diſcretion. But the giddy and the vain are not the only married women who are found to be indiſcreet in their manners and deportment. Some, whoſe feelings are not very refined, no longer take the pains to preſerve their diſcourſe and behaviour from being tinctured with the conſequences of that native defect. They heſitate not to dwell in common converſation on acts of miſconduct and guilt, from the contemplation of which a mind of innate modeſty would inſtantly recoil. They behave to their acquaintance of the other ſex

with

with blunt and unreſtrained familiarity. And they are even blind enough to allege the circumſtance of their being no longer ſingle as a ſufficient reaſon for laying aſide a guarded demeanour, and what they are very willing to term faſtidious delicacy. Some, whoſe perceptions of right and wrong are leſs deficient in purity, quickneſs, and ſtrength, are miſled by faſhion and example, or by an eagerneſs to evince themſelves of a frank and open diſpoſition, into leſs prominent inſtances of the ſame errors. To obſerve the medium between oppoſite failings is one of the moſt difficult exertions of good ſenſe. The ſtiffneſs, the proud and artificial reſerve, which in former ages infected even the intercourſe of private life, are happily diſcarded. It is poſſible, however, that modern manners may have in ſome reſpects a tendency to the contrary extreme. At all events modeſt propriety is not ſtiffneſs. Nor will that portion of reſerve which belongs to diffident ſenſibility appear proud and artificial in the eye of any perſons, ex-

cept of thoſe who deſire to promote unwarrantable freedom, or who are ignorant how greatly decorum of manners contributes to ſecure rectitude of conduct. Odious as formality is, it were far better even to be deemed ſomewhat formal, than actually to be indiſcreet. To imagine that marriage, a ſtate which impoſes new duties upon you, which renders the happineſs of another perſon as well as your own dependent on your actions, ſhould diminiſh the obligations to prudence, ſhould leſſen the duty and the value of female delicacy and reſerve, is an opinion as obviouſly groundleſs as it is pernicious. What can more keenly wound the boſom of a huſband, what can be more likely to deaden his affections, than to perceive his wife daily paying leſs and leſs regard to qualities, which were among thoſe that antecedently to marriage endeared her to him the moſt?

By writers, who have ſuggeſted many excellent rules of duty, and many uſeful admonitions to the female ſex, it has been recom-

recommended to women ſtudiouſly to refrain from diſcovering to their partners in marriage the full extent of their abilities and attainments. And on what grounds has the concealment been recommended? It has been recommended as a probable method of inducing the huſband to give the wife credit for greater talents and knowledge than ſhe poſſeſſes. This is not diſcretion but art. It is diſſimulation, it is deliberate impoſition. It is a fraud, however, to which happily there is no great encouragement. It could ſcarcely be practiſed long without detection. And it could not be detected without exciting in the breaſt of the deluded party, ſuch a degree of diſguſt at the deceitfulneſs of his aſſociate, as would overwhelm her with ſhame and remorſe, if ſhe retained a ſpark of ingenuouſneſs, of virtue, of affection. There is yet another motive on which the ſame advice has been founded. Men, it is ſaid, are not partial to women of ſtrong underſtandings. Jealous of that pre-eminence which they claim in depth of reſearch and ſolidity of judgement, they bear not

in any female, and leaſt of all in a wife, the moſt diſtant appearance of rivalſhip. Admit for a moment the obſervation to be well founded. Is folly to be pretended, becauſe ſenſe may diſpleaſe? Becauſe a man is abſurd, is a woman to be a hypocrite? The obſervation, however, taken in the unqualified acceptation in which it is commongly alleged, is by no means well founded. That it may be practicable to ſhew inſtances of men, who are themſelves ſo deficient, either in underſtanding or in rational conſideration, as to feel mortified by thoſe proofs of unaffected intelligence in a wife, which ought to have placed her higher in their eſteem, I acknowledge. For there is not, perhaps, any ſpecies of weakneſs, of thoughtleſſneſs, or of pride, of which examples may not be diſcovered. In ſuch caſes diſcretion will guard againſt giving unneceſſary offence. But in general it is not the ſenſe that offends. It is ſome quality or ſome diſpoſition by which the ſenſe is accompanied. It is ſome quality or diſpoſition which has no proper connection with that ſenſe. It is one which

which that ſenſe ought to be employed in eradicating. It is one which, if it continue to adhere to that ſenſe, adheres by the fault of the individual herſelf. If, conformably to the example heretofore exhibited in polite life at Paris, a real or ſuppoſed eminence in intellectual endowments were generally to inflame a lady with a propenſity to erect herſelf into an idol for the votaries of ſcience and taſte to worſhip: were it to fill her with ambition to give audience to a levee of deiſtical philoſophers; to ſee her toilet ſurrounded with wits and witlings; to pronounce to the liſtening circle her deciſion on a manuſcript ſonnet; and to appreciate the verſification and the point of the laſt new epigram which aſpired to divert the town; it would neither have been denied nor regretted that a female ſo qualified would, in this country, be deemed one of the leaſt eligible of wives. Such females, however, are phænomena rarely ſeen in the meridian of Great Britain. Further; if ſtrength of underſtanding in a woman be the ſource of pride and ſelf-

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ſufficiency; if it render her manners overbearing, her temper irritable, her prejudices obſtinate; we are not to wonder that its effects are formidable to the other ſex, and eſpecially to him by whom they are with moſt frequency to be endured. But is arrogance, is impatience of contradiction, is reluctance to diſcern and acknowledge error, the neceſſary or the uſual fruit of ſtrong ſenſe in the female mind? Undoubtedly not. In the mind where ſenſe produces that fruit, ſomething far more valuable than a powerful underſtanding is wanting. Let talents be graced with ſimplicity, with good humour, and with feminine modeſty, and there will ſeldom be found a huſband whoſe heart they will not warm with delight.

But if a fund of good ſenſe, larger than is commonly the lot of an individual, be allowed not to be unacceptable in a wife; yet wit, we are told, is a qualification which almoſt every huſband diſapproves in his partner. In this inſtance, as well as in that

which

which has recently been conſidered, common opinion appears not to do complete juſtice to men. If wit be continually exerciſed in ridicule and ſatire; if it nouriſh an itch to ſhine in converſation; if it ſtimulate the poſſeſſor to aim at the manners and reputation of what is called a woman of ſpirit; if it indiſpoſe her to retirement, to improving purſuits, and to the pleaſures of calm and unaffected diſcourſe; is it wonderful that the huſband ſhould regret that it had been granted to his aſſociate? Yet it is not the wit that he diſlikes, but the abuſe of it; the vanity, the ambition, the forward demeanour, and the ſarcaſtic ſpirit by which it is accompanied. Let the wit be diveſted of theſe caſual appendages; let it be characteriſed by gentleneſs and modeſty; let it be exhibited only in the playful ſallies of good nature; and ſhe who is endowed with it will commonly find, that it holds in her huſband's eſteem a due place among the attractions by which ſhe is endeared to him. But it is not to be concealed, that among women, no leſs than in the other ſex, there are individuals who

deem themſelves poſſeſſed of this attraction, when in fact they have it not. If what a wife conceives to be wit ought to bear the name of flippancy and of pertneſs; her huſband may be pardoned, though it ſhould not fill him with rapture. If the dread of her breaking forth, in company, into a rattle of nonſenſe and affectation keep him perpetually ſitting on thorns; he may be pardoned, though he ſhould wiſh that his wife had limited her deſire of mental attainments to the region of common ſenſe.

There is an apprehenſion which is not unfrequently ſeen to obtrude itſelf on the minds of men, when ſpeculating on the queſtion, whether it be deſirable to be united to a woman of extraordinary abilities and acquiſitions; and is the more worthy of notice, as experience has ſometimes proved it to be juſt. While the heart is yet unoccupied, caution, looking to the ſphere of domeſtic œconomy, draws a formidable picture of a learned and philoſophic wife. It repreſents her as one, from whom due attention to houſehold affairs will be expected

in vain. It pictures her as immerſed in her cloſet, and ſecluded in abſtraction; or ſallying forth from her books only to engage in literary diſquiſitions, and to ſtun her wearied mate with ſonorous periods and cumbrous terms of ſcience. It aſks what ground there is for hoping that ſhe will deſcend from mental elevation to the concerns of common life, and the vulgar details of family management; or that ſhe will be capable of adminiſtering affairs which ſhe has never ſtudied, and muſt aſſuredly deſpiſe? That women may addict themſelves to ſolitude and ſtudy, until they contract habits and a turn of mind which unfit them for the ſphere of matrimonial life, is not to be denied. The number however of ladies of this deſcription does not appear likely to ſwell to ſuch an exceſs, as to alarm the other ſex with the proſpect of greatly narrowing the circle from which partners for the connubial ſtate are to be ſelected. It muſt alſo be admitted, that the more profound reſearches of philoſophy and learning are not the purſuits moſt improving to the female mind, and

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moſt congenial to its natural occupations. But if we ſpeak of intelligent and well-informed women in general, of women, who, without becoming abſorbed in the depths of erudition, and loſing all eſteem and all reliſh for ſocial duties, are diſtinguiſhed by a cultivated underſtanding, a poliſhed taſte, and a memory ſtored with uſeful and elegant information; there appears no reaſon to dread from the poſſeſſion of theſe endowments a neglect of the duties of the miſtreſs of a family.

To ſuperintend the various branches of domeſtic management, or, as St. Paul briefly and emphatically expreſſes the ſame office, "to guide the houſe (*c*)," is the indiſpenſable duty of a married woman. No mental endowments furniſh an exemption from it; no plea of improving purſuits and literary pleaſures can excuſe the neglect of it. The taſk muſt be executed either by the maſter or the miſtreſs of the houſe: and reaſon and ſcripture concur in aſſigning

(*c*) 1 Tim. v. 14.

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it unequivocally to the latter. Cuſtom alſo, which in many inſtances preſumes to decide in plain contradiction to theſe ſovereign rules of life, has, in this point, ſo generally conformed to their determination, that a huſband who ſhould perſonally direct the proceedings of the houſekeeper and the cook, and intrude into the petty arrangements of daily œconomy, would appear in all eyes, except his own, nearly as ridiculous as if he were to aſſume to himſelf the habiliments of his wife, or to occupy his mornings with her needles and work-bags. It is true nevertheleſs, that, in executing this office, a wife is to conſult the wiſhes of her huſband; and in proportion to the magnitude of any particular points, to act the more ſtudiouſly according to his ideas rather than her own. The duty of obedience on her part, extends to the province of guiding the houſe no leſs than to the other branches of her conduct.

Are you then the miſtreſs of a family? Fulfil the charge for which you are reſponſible. Attempt not to transfer your proper

per occupation to a favourite maid, however tried may be her fidelity and her ſkill. To confide implicitly in ſervants, is the way to render them undeſerving of confidence. If they be already negligent or diſhoneſt, your remiſſneſs encourages their faults, while it continues your own loſs and inconvenience. If their integrity be unſullied, they are ignorant of the principles by which your expences ought to be regulated; and will act for you on other principles, which, if you were conſcious of them, you ought to diſapprove. They know not the amount of your huſband's income, nor of his debts, nor of his other incumbrances; nor, if they knew all theſe things, could they judge what part of his revenue may reaſonably be expended in the departments with which they are concerned. They will not reflect that ſmall degrees of waſte and extravagance, when they could eaſily be guarded againſt, are criminal; nor will they ſuſpect the magnitude of the ſum to which ſmall degrees of waſte and extravagance, frequently repeated, will accumulate in the courſe of the year.

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They will conſider the credit of your character as intruſted to them; and will conceive, that they uphold it by profuſion. The larger your family is, the greater will be the annual portion of your expenditure, which will, by theſe means, be thrown away. And if your ample fortune incline you to regard the ſum as ſcarcely worth the little trouble which would have been required to prevent the loſs; conſider the extent of good which it might have accompliſhed, had it been employed in feeding the hungry and clothing the naked. Be regular in requiring, and punctual in examining, your weekly accounts. Be frugal without parſimony; ſave, that you may diſtribute. Study the comfort of all under your roof, even of the humbleſt inhabitant of the kitchen. Pinch not the inferior part of the family to provide againſt the coſt of a day of ſplendor. Conſider the welfare of the ſervants of your own ſex as particularly committed to you. Encourage them in religion, and be active in furniſhing them with the means of inſtruction. Let their number be fully

adequate to the work which they have to perform; but let it not be ſwelled either from a love of parade, or from blind indulgence, to an extent which is needleſs. In thoſe ranks of life where the mind is not accuſtomed to continued reflection, idleneſs is a never-failing ſource of folly and of vice. Forget not to indulge them at fit ſeaſons with viſits to their friends; nor grudge the pains of contriving opportunities for the indulgence. Let not one tyranniſe over another. In hearing complaints, be patient; in inquiring into faults, be candid; in reproving, be temperate and unruffled. Let not your kindneſs to the meritorious terminate when they leave your houſe; but reward good conduct in them, and encourage it in others, by ſubſequent acts of benevolence adapted to their circumſtances. Let it be your reſolution, when called upon to deſcribe the characters of ſervants who have quitted your family, to act conſcientiouſly towards all the parties intereſted, neither aggravating nor diſguiſing the truth. And never let any one of thoſe whoſe qualifications are to be

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mentioned, nor of thoſe who apply for the account, find you ſeduced from your purpoſe by partiality or by reſentment.

There is ſometimes ſeen in families an inmate, commonly a female relation of the maſter or of the miſtreſs of the houſe, who, though admitted to live in the parlour, is, in truth, an humble dependent, received either from motives of charity, or for the ſake of being made uſeful in the conduct of domeſtic affairs, or of being a companion to her protectreſs when the latter is not otherwiſe engaged or amuſed. Have you ſuch an inmate? Let your behaviour to her be ſuch as ſhe ought to experience. Pretend not to call her a friend, while you treat her as a drudge. If ſickneſs, or infirmity, or a ſudden preſſure of occupation, diſqualify you from perſonally attending in detail to the cuſtomary affairs of your houſehold, avail yourſelf of her aſſiſtance. But ſeek it not from an indolent averſion to trouble, nor from a haughty wiſh to rid yourſelf of the employment. While you

have recourſe to it, receive it as an act of kindneſs, not as the conſtrained obedience of an upper ſervant. Teach the inferior parts of your family to reſpect her, by reſpecting her yourſelf. Remember the awkwardneſs of her ſituation, and conſult her comfort. Is ſhe to look for friends in the kitchen, or in the houſekeeper's room? You expreſs ſurpriſe at the impropriety of the ſuppoſition. Is ſhe to live an inſulated being under your roof? Your benevolence revolts at the idea. Admit her then not merely to the formalities, but to the freedom and genuine ſatisfactions of intercourſe. Tempt her not, by a reſerved demeanour, perpetually reminding her of the obligations which ſhe is unfortunate enough to owe you, to echo your opinions, to crouch to your humours, to act the part of a diſſembler. If ſervile aſſiduities and fawning compliances be the means by which ſhe is to ingratiate herſelf, bluſh for your proud and unfeeling heart. Is it the part of friendſhip, of liberal protection, to haraſs her with difficulties, to enſnare her

ſincerity,

ſincerity, to eſtabliſh her in the petty arts of cunning and adulation? Rather diſmiſs her with ſome ſmall pittance of bounty to ſearch in obſcurity for an honeſt maintenance, than retain her to learn hypocriſy and to teach you arrogance, to be corrupted and to corrupt.

In all the domeſtic expences which are wholly, or in part, regulated by your opinion, beware that, while you pay a decent regard to your huſband's rank in ſociety, you are not hurried into oſtentation and prodigality by vanity lurking in your breaſt. Examine your own motives to the bottom. Do you feel an inward ſenſation of uneaſineſs when one of your neighbours is reported to maintain a table more elegant than your own, to ſurpaſs you in the number of ſervants, or in the coſtlineſs of their liveries? Do you feel ſolicitous for an additional carriage on hearing that the equipage of an acquaintance has recently been enlarged? Are you eager to new-model or to decorate a room afreſh, when

neither uſe nor propriety requires the alteration, becauſe a ſimilar ſtep has been adopted in a manſion in your vicinity? Do you diſcard handſome furniture before it has rendered half the ſervice of which it was capable, becauſe ſome frivolous lady can no longer bear the ſight of the chairs and the window-curtains which have remained two or three tedious years in her drawing-room? Then your profeſſions of being only deſirous to do what is requiſite in your ſtation are mere pretences to deceive others, or proofs that you are ignorant of yourſelf. You are laviſh, vain, proud, emulous, ambitious; you are defective in ſome of the firſt duties of a wife and of a Chriſtian. Inſtead of ſquandering, in extravagance and parade, that property which ought partly to have been reſerved in ſtore for the future benefit of your offspring, and partly to have been liberally beſtowed for the preſent advantage of thoſe whom relationſhip or perſonal merit, or the general claims which diſtreſs has upon ſuch as are capable of removing it, entitle

entitle to your bounty; let it be your conſtant aim to obey the ſcriptural precepts of ſobriety and moderation; let it be your delight to fulfil every office of unaffected benevolence. Picture to yourſelf the difficulties, the calamities, the final ruin, in which tradeſmen, with their wives and children, are frequently involved, even by the delay of payments due to them from families to which they have not dared to refuſe credit. Subject not yourſelf in the ſight of God to the charge of being acceſſary to ſuch miſeries. Guard by every becoming method of amiable repreſentation and perſuaſion, if circumſtances ſhould make them neceſſary, and there is a proſpect of this being taken in good part, the man to whom you are united from contributing to ſuch miſeries either by profuſion or by inadvertence. Is he careleſs as to the inſpection of his affairs? Endeavour to open his eyes to the dangers of neglect and procraſtination. Does he anticipate future, perhaps contingent, reſources? Gently awaken him to a conviction of his criminal

imprudence. Encourage him, if he ſtand in need of encouragement, in vigilant but not avaricious foreſight; in the practice of enlarged and never-failing charity. If your huſband, accuſtomed to acquire money by profeſſional exertions, ſhould become too little inclined to impart freely what he has laborioufly earned; ſuggeſt to him that one of the inducements to labour, addreſſed to him by an Apoſtle, is no other than this, "that he may have to give to "him that needeth (*d*)." If his extenſive intercourſe with the world, familiariſing him to inſtances of merited or of pretended diſtreſs, have the effect of rendering him ſomewhat too ſuſpicious of deceit, ſomewhat too ſevere towards thoſe whoſe miſfortunes are, in part at leaſt, to be aſcribed to themſelves; remind him that "God is "kind to the unthankful and the evil (*e*)." Remind him that what conſcience may require to be withheld from the unworthy, ought to be dedicated to the relief of indi-

(*d*) Epheſ. iv. 28. (*e*) Luke, vi. 35.

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gent deſert. Win him conſtantly and practically to "remember the words of the "Lord Jeſus; how he ſaid, "It is more "bleſſed to give than to receive (*f*)."

Women, who have been raiſed by marriage to the poſſeſſion of rank and opulence unknown to them before, are frequently the moſt oſtentatious in their proceedings. Yet a moderate ſhare of penetration might have taught them to read, in the example of others, the ill ſucceſs of their own ſchemes to gain reſpect by diſplaying their elevation. All ſuch attempts ſharpen the diſcernment and quicken the reſearches of envy; and draw from obſcurity into public notice the circumſtances which pride and pomp are labouring to bury in oblivion.

The want of the ſedateneſs of character, which Chriſtianity requires in all women, is in a married woman doubly reprehenſible. If, now that you are entered into

(*f*) Acts, xx. 35.

connubial

connubial life, you diſcloſe in your dreſs proofs of vanity and affectation, or plunge headlong into the wild hurry of amuſements; the cenſure which you deſerve is greater than it would be, were you ſingle. Any approach towards thoſe indelicate faſhions in attire, which levity and ſhameleſſneſs occaſionally introduce, would for the ſame reaſon be even more blamable in you now than heretofore. The general ſubjects of dreſs and amuſements have occupied ſo much attention in the preceding pages, that it is unneceſſary to dilate upon them here. There is, however, one point which requires a few words. It is a common obſervation that thoſe women, who in public are moſt addicted to finery in dreſs, are in private the greateſt ſlatterns. Let the dread of verifying it contribute in its reaſonable degree to extinguiſh the propenſity to finery in your breaſt. Remember that any diſguſting habit on your part will be the more offenſive to your huſband, on account of the cloſeneſs of the union ſubſiſting between you.

St.

St. Paul, among various admonitions relating to married women in particular, enforces on them the duty of being "keep-"ers at home (*g*)." The precept, in its application to modern times, may be conſidered as having a two-fold reference. It may reſpect ſhort viſits paid to acquaintances and friends in the vicinity of your reſidence; or excurſions, which require an abſence of conſiderable duration. In the remarks about to be offered, I mean not to allude to viſits or excurſions, which are undertaken on fit occaſions from benevolence to neighbours who are in affliction, from conſiderations of perſonal health (*h*), or from

(*g*) Titus, ii. 5.

(*h*) Yet it may not be unneceſſary to obſerve that, when a previous diſpoſition to rambling exiſts, it ſometimes preſſes motives of health into the ſervice of inclination in a manner not altogether warrantable: and that, even in perſons who are attached to their own homes, the reaſonable attention which is due to health is ſeen occaſionally to deviate into the abſurdities of whim and folly, abſurdities which gain ſtrength from every indulgence. "It is ſur-"priſing," ſaid Dr. Johnſon, "how people will go to a diſ-"tance for what they may have at home. I knew a Lady "who came up from Lincolnſhire to Knightſbridge with "one

from any other urgent motive of duty and utility. I ſhall ſpeak of ſuch only as are nearly or altogether ſpontaneous; of viſits which are made in the common intercourſe of ſociety, and of journies which ariſe from curioſity and the proſpect of entertainment. Of theſe voluntary abſences from home, each kind is proper in its ſeaſon, each culpable and pernicious in its exceſs.

Formerly, when the want of turnpike roads and of other accommodations, now univerſal, precluded families in the ſame diſtrict from viſiting each other, except on long previous notice, and rendered each viſit an object of almoſt as much ſolicitude and preparation as now precede a faſhionable trip to the Continent; what was the reſult? Stiffneſs of manners, arrogant pomp, prejudices never to be removed, and ani-

" one of her daughters, and gave five guineas a week for " a lodging and a warm bath, that is, mere warm water. " *That*, you know, could not be had in Lincolnſhire. *She* "*ſaid it was made either too hot or too cold there.*" Boſwell's Tour to the Hebrides, 2d Edit. p. 354.

moſities entailed with the paternal eſtate. At preſent, facility of acceſs and intercourſe expoſe women, and not only thoſe who are fixed in towns, or within a ſmall diſtance of towns, but moſt of thoſe alſo who live in the country, to the danger of acquiring a habit of continual viſiting, and the other habits which St. Paul juſtly aſcribes to thoſe who have contracted the former. "They learn to be idle, wandering about "from houſe to houſe; and not only idle, "but tatlers alſo and buſy-bodies, ſpeak-"ing things which they ought not (*i*)." The "wanderers" of the preſent day could not have been more happily characteriſed, had the Apoſtle been witneſs of their proceedings. If, week after week, the mornings be perpetually frittered away in making calls, and the afternoons ſwallowed up by dining viſits, what but idleneſs can be the conſequence? Domeſtic buſineſs is interrupted; vigilance as to family concerns is ſuſpended; induſtry, re-

(*i*) 1 Tim. v. 13.

flection,

flection, mental and religious improvement are deſerted and forgotten. The mind grows liſtleſs; home becomes dull; the carriage is ordered afreſh; and a remedy for the evil is ſought from the very cauſe which produced it. From being "idle" at home, the next ſtep naturally is to be "tatlers and buſy-bodies" abroad. In a ſucceſſion of viſits, all the news of the vicinity is collected; the character and conduct of each neighbouring family are ſcrutiniſed; neither age nor ſex eſcapes the prying eye and inquiſitive tongue of curioſity. Each "tatler," anxious to diſtinguiſh herſelf by the diſplay of ſuperior knowledge and diſcernment, indulges unbounded licence to her conjectures; ſeizes the flying report of the hour as an incontrovertible truth; and renders her narratives more intereſting by embelliſhment and aggravation. And all, in revealing ſecrets, in judging with raſhneſs, in cenſuring with ſatisfaction, in propagating ſlander, and in various other ways, "ſpeak things "which they ought not."

The

The commodiouſneſs, which now attends travelling, has rendered diſtant expeditions and long abſences from home far more frequent than they were in the days of our anceſtors. By a more extenſive communication with the world, knowledge, liberality of ſentiment, and refinement of manners, have been widely diffuſed. Rational curioſity has gladly availed itſelf of the eaſe and convenience with which the pleaſure that attends the inſpection of celebrated works of art, and of grand and beautiful ſcenes of nature, may be enjoyed. Occaſional journies undertaken for ſuch purpoſes, though neither the improvement of health, nor any other urgent call of duty, ſhould be among the motives which give birth to them, are at ſuitable times not only innocent but commendable. Such journies, if entered upon with right diſpoſitions, and if the objects to be viſited be ſelected with judgement, in addition to the gratification which they furniſh, impart uſeful knowledge, and call into exerciſe the beſt feelings of the heart.

The

The contemplation of human talents actively and beneficially employed leads the mind to him who gave them. The ſurvey of ſeas and rivers, mountains and foreſts, and of cultivated regions overſpread with fertility, teaches the ſtupendous power, and the no leſs ſtupendous goodneſs of God. And the firſt and ſtrongeſt impreſſions which we ought to receive and cheriſh when we behold the ingenuity of man, or the magnificence and beauty of nature, are a ſenſe of the perfections, and a deſire to promote the glory of their common author. But the numerous and protracted excurſions from the family manſion, which faſhion, the deſire of diſplaying wealth, and the reſtleſſneſs of a vacant mind, excite at preſent, are productive of conſequences very unfavourable to individuals and to the public. I do not ſpeak of the expence with which they are uſually attended; though it is in many caſes a burden which preſſes heavily on private fortunes, and cripples the exertions and extinguiſhes the ardor of benevolence.

Nor

Nor ſhall I enlarge on the interruption of domeſtic habits and occupations, nor on the acquiſition of an unſettled, a tattling, and a meddling ſpirit: evils which ſpring from the cuſtom of "wandering" from place to place, no leſs than from that of "wandering from houſe to houſe;" and often diſplay themſelves in the former caſe on a wider ſcale and in ſtronger characters, than in the latter. But the loſs of the power and opportunity of doing good, and the poſitive effects of a pernicious example, are points which muſt not be overlooked. Home is the center round which the influence of every married woman is principally accumulated. It is there that ſhe will naturally be known and reſpected the moſt; it is there, at leaſt, that ſhe may be more known and more reſpected than ſhe can be in any other place. It is there that the general character, the acknowledged property, and the eſtabliſhed connections of her huſband, will contribute with more force than they can poſſeſs elſewhere, to give weight and

impreſſiveneſs to all her proceedings. Home, therefore, is the place where the pattern which ſhe exhibits in perſonal manners, in domeſtic arrangements, and in every branch of her private conduct, will be more carefully obſerved, and more willingly copied by her neighbours in a rank of life ſimilar to her own, than it would be in a ſituation where ſhe was a little known and tranſitory viſitant. Home too is the place where ſhe will poſſeſs peculiar means of doing good among the humbler claſſes of ſociety. All the favourable circumſtances already mentioned, which ſurround her there, add ſingular efficacy to her perſuaſions, to her recommendations, to her advice. Her habitual inſight into local events and local neceſſities, and her acquaintance with the characters and the ſituations of individuals, enable her to adapt the relief which ſhe affords to the merit and to the diſtreſs of the perſon aſſiſted. They enable her, in the charitable expenditure of any ſpecific ſum, to accompliſh

pliſh purpoſes of greater and more durable utility than could have been attained in a place where ſhe would not have enjoyed theſe advantages. They who are frequently abſent from home, without an adequate cauſe, ſpontaneouſly abandon in a very conſiderable degree all theſe eſpecial means of benefiting their equals, their inferiors, poſſibly even their ſuperiors; means which Providence has committed to them, in order that each might be thus employed; means for the due employment of which they will be deemed reſponſible hereafter. Continually on the wing from one ſcene to another, they are like trees tranſplanted ſo often, that they take firm root no where. They appear covered with ſhewy verdure; but they bear little fruit. The ties of connection between them and the vicinity are broken. With the upper ranks, their intercourſe is that of form and hurry; to the lower, they are become diſtant, cold, and eſtranged. When at their nominal home, they are there without attachment. They perch there, like a bird on a branch, rather

as having found a convenient baiting-place, than from partiality to the ſpot. Every perſon who comes to ſee them expects to hear of another approaching expedition; and if he find himſelf miſtaken, ſurpriſes all whom he meets with the wonder. The habit grows by indulgence. Every trifle ſwells into a motive and a pretext for quitting their natural reſidence. In the winter, London is the magnet which attracts them. The deſire of appearing polite, and the pride of being able to ſpeak of having recently viſited the metropolis, conſpire with their impatience of home. If they hear that a neighbouring family is going to town, to ſtay behind becomes intolerable. When ſtationed in the capital, ſome impending feſtivity, ſome approaching day of ſplendor at Court, affords an excuſe for delaying their return. When ſummer commences, the center of attraction is tranſferred to ſome watering-place; and its force again proves irreſiſtible. Neither are the intervals between theſe prominent periods in the ſyſtem of wandering condemned wholly to the drearineſs of the family ſeat.

Little

Little tours to ſee ſights, long circuits of viſits from the houſe of one acquaintance to that of another, and various incidental excurſions, break the wearifome period into ſmall parts; and aided by the cheering hope of longer expeditions, render life capable of being endured. When the rage of rambling has ſeized a woman, it is not always that the malady proceeds to the height which has been deſcribed. Like other maladies, it has its degrees. Neither are its attacks confined to the female ſex. The duties of the Maſter of the family, of the Landlord, of the Country Gentleman, are on many occaſions groſsly neglected in conſequence of the immoderate indulgence of a propenſity to roving. The occupier of the land, deprived of the friendly intercourſe, which formerly ſubſiſted between him and the owner, and created a mutual regard, tempered with reſpect on one ſide, and ſtrengthened by affability and kindneſs on the other, is degraded into a dependent on the caprice of a ſteward. The abſence of a common patron who uſed to conciliate differ-

ences, to encourage the meritorious, to overawe the refractory, is ſeverely felt in the neighbouring villages and hamlets. The rents of the eſtate, which formerly were expended on the ſpot to the general benefit of the vicinity, are now ſunk in the metropolis, or abſorbed in ſome faſhionable reſort of diſſipation. I apprehend, however, that it happens much more frequently that the huſband is led from home in accommodation to the humours of his wife, than that the latter is dragged away by the determination of her huſband. But be that conjecture true or falſe, the moral obligation incumbent on you, who now read theſe lines, if you be a wife, is the ſame. To you the Apoſtolic precept in either caſe is equally addreſſed. In either caſe, the Apoſtle equally enjoins you to be a "keeper "at home." Obey the ſpirit of the injunction. Remember the duties which you have to perform at home, duties not ſo well to be performed elſewhere; and the good which you can there accompliſh by exertions and liberality, that would by no means

means be equally productive of advantage in a place where you were comparatively a ſtranger. Study to give the benefit of your example and of your benevolence chiefly to thoſe, whom Providence entitles to it by having placed them within the natural ſphere of your influence. Inſtead of encouraging a gadding and unſettled ſpirit in others, by imitating the pattern which they exhibit; ſtudy by exhibiting a better to improve them, or at leaſt to exculpate yourſelf.

Let your behaviour to all your acquaintance be the reſult of modeſty united with benevolence. Be obliging to all with whom you aſſociate; cultivate the friendſhip of the good; and ſtedfaſtly perſiſt in ſhunning all habitual intercourſe with perſons of bad or of doubtful character, however complying others may be around you. To be thus complying, is to impair the ſalutary principle of ſhaming into obſcurity the corrupting example of vice: it is to withdraw from virtue the collateral ſupport which it

derives from the dread of general diſgrace. Be conſiſtent in the ſelection of your aſſociates, and proportion, as nearly as circumſtances may allow, your intercourſe with individuals to their intrinſic worth. Purſue not the ſociety of women of higher rank than your own; be not elated by their notice; look not down on thoſe who enjoy it not. If one of your neighbours, one who in a drawing-room was accuſtomed to be ranged below you, be ſuddenly raiſed, in conſequence of a title being conferred on her family, to pre-eminence in her turn; envy her not, love her not the leſs, pant not for ſimilar advancement. You already enjoy a decoration, or, if you do not, the fault is your own, ſuperior to all the glories of the Peerage, "the ornament of a meek "and quiet ſpirit." If your huſband ſhould happen to receive ſome acceſſion of dignity, let it not excite in your mind one arrogant emotion, nor change your demeanour to your friends and neighbours. "New and "unaccuſtomed dignities," to uſe the words of an accurate obſerver of manners, "often

"inſpire

" inſpire weak minds with a diſpoſition to " diſplay ſupercilious airs and a ridiculous " deportment towards thoſe whom they " conſider as their inferiors, and from whom " they are jealous of a want of reſpect be- " cauſe of their late equality. Something " of this kind is obſervable even in England, " particularly in the wives of new-created " Baronets, and the families of new-created " Peers. But in England airs of this kind " are received with ſuch contempt, and " ſometimes repelled with ſuch ſeverity, " that they are ſeldom aſſumed (*k*)." Shun ſuch airs with unremitting ſolicitude. Shun them, however, on the principles of Chriſtian humility far more than from an expectation of the contempt with which they may be returned. " Let your moderation " be known unto all (*l*);" not by artificial condeſcenſion, which either betrays the pride which it was intended to conceal, or indicates at beſt a miſguided judgement; but

(*k*) Dr. Moore's View of the Cauſes and Progreſs of the French Revolution, Vol. i. p. 131.

(*l*) Philipp. iv. 5.

by

by perſeverance in the ſame ingenuous affability, the ſame diffident mildneſs, the ſame benevolent concern for the happineſs of all your friends and acquaintance, which you cultivated before your elevation. Beware, leſt the acquiſition of honour ſhould create a deſire of diſtinction, which previouſly did not exiſt in your breaſt. She, who, as long as her huſband was a Commoner, was contented in her ſtation, has often been ſeen, when a Peereſs, to be inflamed with tormenting eagerneſs to aſcend higher in the ſcale of Nobility.

The remark has been made, and perhaps with juſtice, that if attention be directed to the character and conduct of the different parts of families reſident in the vicinity of each other, it will commonly be found, that leſs cordiality prevails between the ladies than between their huſbands. It is certain, that neighbouring gentlemen are continually ſet at variance by very unwarrantable cauſes; by petty offences unworthy of conſideration; by diverſities of opinion con-

cerning points, of which each individual is entitled to judge for himſelf; by contending claims which ought to have been ſettled by amicable arbitration, or by an amicable reference to the deciſion of law. Treſpaſſes, real or ſuppoſed, on manerial rights; tranſgreſſions againſt the ſublime code of fox-hunting juriſprudence; differences of ſentiment as to the meaſures of thoſe who guide the helm of Government, or as to the nomination of a candidate to repreſent ſome adjoining borough at an election; theſe are circumſtances frequently ſufficient openly to embroil half the gentlemen of the diſtrict with their neighbours; or at leaſt to produce, while the ſemblance of friendſhip is upheld, the lurking malevolence of enmity. By ſome of theſe cauſes of diſagreement even the female boſom is capable of being actuated. And the ill-will produced by any one of them in the breaſt of the maſter of the family will generally diffuſe itſelf through the houſe. In addition to the ſhyneſſes and diſſenſions between ladies in the ſame vicinity, which originate from theſe

theſe ſources, there are others ſpringing from that irritability reſpecting circumſtances of perſonal attention which, in the female ſex, is ſingularly conſpicuous. In all caſes where contempt and neglect are to be apprehended, women are far more quick-ſighted than men: and their anxiety on the ſubject miſleads them, on a variety of occaſions, into ſuſpicions for which there is no foundation. When the mind is in this ſtate, if a viſit be not returned at the cuſtomary time, the delay, ſhould no ſtrong reaſon for it preſent itſelf at once to the expecting party, is attributed to faſtidiouſneſs and pride. If an invitation be not given at the time, or to the extent, which was ſecretly deſired, ſimilar motives are aſſigned. An obſcure or ambiguous expreſſion, uſed inadvertently, is twiſted into an injurious or a diſdainful meaning. Silence, or ſerioufneſs of manner, proceeding from accidental thoughtfulneſs, or from ſome caſual viciſſitude of health, is conſtrued into premeditated coolneſs. Common attentions of civility ſhewn towards a third perſon

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are indignantly beheld as tokens of deliberate preference. Hence ariſe prejudices and antipathies, which years may not be able to eradicate. Or ſilly affronts are taken on points of precedence. Becauſe a lady is uſhered forth in a ball-room to dance, before another who deemed herſelf ſuperior; the company is thrown into confuſion, and laſting hoſtilities take place between the parties. Yet the priority was aſſigned, where, according to the rules of etiquette, it was due. Or the merits of the caſe, though determined erroneouſly, might be ſo nearly balanced, that the whole aſſembled college of heralds would have been perplexed to decide the queſtion. Where then is the ſpirit inculcated by the Apoſtle? "Let nothing be done through "ſtrife or vain-glory; but in lowlineſs of "mind let each eſteem others better than "themſelves (*m*)."

In the progreſs of matrimonial life it is ſcarcely poſſible but that the wife and the

(*m*) Philipp. i. 3.

huſband

huſband will diſcover faults in each other, which they had not previouſly expected. The diſcovery is by no means a proof, in many caſes it is not even a preſumption, that deceit had originally been practiſed. Affection, like that Chriſtian charity of whoſe nature it largely participates, in its early periods "hopeth all things, believeth "all things (*n*)." Time and experience, without neceſſarily detracting from its warmth, ſuperadd judgement and obſervation. The characters of the parties united mutually expand; and diſcloſe thoſe little receſſes which, even in diſpoſitions moſt inclined to be open and undiſguiſed, ſcarcely find opportunities of unfolding themſelves antecedently to marriage. Intimate connection and uninterrupted ſociety reveal ſhades of error in opinion and in conduct, which, in the hurry of ſpirits and the dazzled ſtate of mind peculiar to the ſeaſon of growing attachment, eſcaped even the vigilant eye of ſolicitude. Or the fact unhappily may be, that in conſequence of new ſcenes, new circumſtances, new temptations,

(*n*) Cor. xiii. 7.

failings

failings which did not exiſt when the matrimonial ſtate commenced, may have been contracted ſince. The ſtream may have derived a debaſing tincture from the region through which it has lately flowed. But the fault, whether it did or did not exiſt while the parties were ſingle, is now diſcerned. What then is to be the conſequence of the diſcovery? Is affection to be repreſſed, is it to be permitted to grow languid, becauſe the object of it now appears tinctured with ſome few additional defects? I allude not to thoſe flagrant deſertions of moral and religious principle, thoſe extremes of depravity, which are not unknown to the connubial ſtate, and give a ſhock to the tendereſt feelings of the heart. I ſpeak of thoſe common failings, which long and familiar intercourſe gradually detects in every human character. Whether they are perceived by the huſband in the wife, or by the wife in the huſband, to contribute by every becoming method to their removal is an act of duty ſtrictly incumbent

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on the diſcoverer. It is more than an act of duty: it is the firſt office of love. "Thou ſhalt not *hate* thy neighbour *in* "*ſuffering ſin upon him* (*o*)," is a precept, the diſregard of which is the moſt criminal in thoſe perſons, by whom the warmeſt regard for the welfare of each other ought to be diſplayed.

In the courſe of the foregoing pages I have had occaſion fully to notice the power which a married woman poſſeſſes of influencing the diſpoſitions of her huſband, and the conſequent duty of exerting it for the improvement of his moral and religious character. It remains now to guard the wife againſt the effect of emotions and impreſſions, which might prevent her from reaping the benefit of ſimilar exertions of duty and kindneſs on the part of her huſband. Let her beware of diſcouraging him, by irritability of temper, or by inconſiderate proneneſs to miſ-

(*o*) Levit. xix. 17.

conſtruc-

conſtruction, from communicating to her his opinion, when he believes that ſhe has fallen, or is in danger of falling, into error. To point out failings in the ſpirit of kindneſs, is one of the cleareſt indications of friendſhip. It is, however, one of thoſe delicate offices from which friendſhip may the moſt eaſily be deterred. If a huſband find his endeavours to diſcharge it frequently miſconceived; if he ſee them uſually producing perturbations difficult to be allayed, and extending far and wide beyond the original ſubject of diſcuſſion; he may learn to think it wiſer to let an evil exiſt in ſilence, than to attempt to obviate it at the hazard of a greater. If his conſcience at any time call upon him to ſet before his aſſociate in connubial life ſome defect, either in her general conduct, or in a particular inſtance; he ought unqueſtionably to fulfil the taſk with a lively conviction of his own imperfections, and of the need which he has of indulgence and forbearance on her part. He ought to fulfil

it with a tenderneſs of manner flowing from the genuine warmth of affection; with an ardent ſolicitude to ſhun as far as may be poſſible the appearance of authoritative injunctions; and with prudence adapting itſelf to the peculiarities of the mind which he is deſirous to impreſs. In all caſes he ought to guard, with ſcrupulous anxiety, againſt exciting in the breaſt of his wife a ſuſpicion that he is purpoſely minute in prying into her failings; and againſt loading her ſpirits with groundleſs apprehenſions that the original glow of his attachment is impaired by thoſe which he has noticed. He ought to remember, that however culpable the diſpoſition may be, there is yet a diſpoſition not unfrequent in women no leſs than in men when reſtrained, and in their own opinion without ſufficient cauſe, from proceeding in any particular path, to feel in conſequence of the reſtraint itſelf a ſtrong propenſity to advance further in that path than they had proceeded before. But what if in one or more of theſe points he ſhould be negligent

and

and defective? Let not a momentary quickneſs of manner, let not an inadvertent expreſſion haſtily dropping from his lips, nor even the diſcovery of ſome emotion tinctured with human infirmity, be noticed with reſentment, or followed by retort and recrimination. If he ſhould evidently be liable to juſt cenſure himſelf, his admonition may yet be wiſe; his reproof, if he be neceſſitated even to reprove, may be juſt. Though on former occaſions he ſhould have been hurried into animadverſion without reaſon, there may be reaſon for his animadverſion now. Let him not be thought partial and unwarrantably ſtrict, if he ſhould chance to obſerve, and to obſerve with ſome indications of diſquietude, a failing when exemplified by his wife, which in other women he had ſcarcely regarded. Is it ſurpriſing that he ſhould be alive to circumſtances in the conduct of the perſon moſt intimately connected with him, which affected him little or not at all in a more diſtant relation, in an acquaintance, in a ſtranger? It ſometimes happens, when a

married woman has not been led to attend to conſiderations ſuch as thoſe which have now been ſuggeſted, that advice which, if given by the huſband, would not have met with a favourable acceptation, is thankfully received from others. To know that this ſtate of things is poſſible ſhould be a leſſon to the huſband againſt miſconduct and imprudence; for to them its exiſtence may be owing. But let it alſo be to the wife an admonition againſt captiouſneſs and prejudice; for had ſhe been free from them, it could not have exiſted.

CHAP. XIII.

DUTIES OF MATRIMONIAL LIFE CONTINUED, WITH A VIEW TO THE DIFFERENT SITUATIONS AND CIRCUMSTANCES OF DIFFERENT INDIVIDUALS.

THE reflections which have hitherto been made on the duties of married women have had little reference to particularities of rank or ſituation. Yet by ſuch particularities, moral advantages and diſadvantages, duties and temptations, are in many inſtances created or diverſified. London and the country, elevated rank and a middle ſtation, differ ſo far from each other in ſome of the opportunities of good and of evil which they reſpectively furniſh; that a little time and attention may not be unprofitably employed in explaining ſome of the points of difference, and enforcing the obligations which ſeverally reſult from

them. It will, perhaps, be found that no obſervation can be addreſſed to a perſon reſident in the metropolis, which, in certain circumſtances, may not be applied with propriety to the conduct of the wife of a country gentleman; nor any admonition ſuggeſted to the higher ranks, which may not be transferred with ſlight alteration to ſome of the inferior orders of the community. In the remarks therefore which are about to be ſubmitted to the reader, though ſome of the duties reſpectively incumbent on married women of different deſcriptions may, for the ſake of perſpicuity, be inveſtigated under ſeparate heads, correſponding to the different ſituations of the parties; I would by no means wiſh it to be underſtood, that what is primarily offered to the attention of one claſs of married women, may not appertain in a certain meaſure to all.

Among the temptations to which a lady reſident in London is by that circumſtance expoſed, few are more enſnaring than thoſe,

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the primary and immediate effect of which is to encroach upon time. The public amuſements, which the metropolis and its precincts afford, are daily ſeen to prove ſo faſcinating by their number and their variety to every part, eſpecially to the younger part, of the polite world, as to occupy a very large proportion of the day and of the evening; or, to ſpeak with more propriety, of thoſe hours, whether before or after midnight, during which the polite world is abroad. For it is not merely the time actually ſpent in the enjoyment of the amuſement which is to be placed to the account. The hours of preparation which precede, and thoſe of languor and inactivity which follow, equally belong to it. Neither do the ſcenes of public entertainment loſe their power, as far as the conſumption of time is in queſtion, over thoſe who, ſatiated and palled by tedious familiarity, no longer find in any ſpectacle or mode of diverſion the gratification which it once beſtowed. The delights of novelty are paſt; but the chains of faſhion and habit are rivet-

ted. The mind, incapable through diſuſe of reliſhing better purſuits, experiences in the theatre and the rotunda, if not a poſitive ſatisfaction, yet a relief from the dulneſs of vacancy, and the painfulneſs of intercourſe with itſelf. But it is unneceſſary to dwell on a topic which has already been the ſubject of much obſervation. Let us turn our thoughts to other circumſtances, which, if not peculiar to the capital, yet exiſt there to an extent not to be paralleled elſewhere; and occaſion in all places, according to the degree in which they exiſt, an unprofitable conſumption of time, and all the evils attendant on the waſte of irrevocable hours.

London is the centre to which almoſt all the individuals who fill the upper and middle ranks of ſociety are ſucceſſively attracted. The country pays its tribute to the ſupreme city. Buſineſs, intereſt, and curioſity, the love of pleaſure, the deſire of knowledge, the thirſt for change, the ambition to be deemed polite, occaſion a continual

tinual influx into the metropolis from every corner of the kingdom. Hence a large and a widely diſperſed and a continually encreaſing acquaintance is the natural conſequence of frequent reſidence in London. If a married lady ſuffer herſelf to be drawn into the ſyſtem of proceeding, to which ſuch an acquaintance is generally ſeen to lead; uſeful occupations and improving purſuits are either at an end, or are carried on with extreme diſadvantages, multiplied interruptions, declining activity, ardour, and ſatisfaction. The morning, at leaſt what is called the morning, is ſwallowed up in driving from ſtreet to ſtreet, from ſquare to ſquare, in purſuit of perſons whom ſhe is afraid of diſcovering, in knocking at doors where ſhe dreads being admitted. Time is frittered away in a ſort of ſmall intercourſe with numbers, for whom ſhe feels little regard, and whom ſhe knows to feel as little for herſelf. Yet every thing breathes the ſpirit of cordiality and attachment. The pleaſure expreſſed at meeting is ſo warm, the enquiries after each other's

health ſo minute, the ſolicitude, if either party has caught a cold at the laſt opera, ſo extreme; that a ſtranger to the ways of high life, and to the true value of words in the modern dictionaries of compliment, would be in aſtoniſhment at ſuch effuſions of diſintereſted benevolence. Invitation ſucceeds invitation; engagement preſſes on engagement: etiquette offers, form accepts, and indifference aſſumes the air of gratitude and rapture. Thus a continual progreſs is made in the looks, the language, and the feelings of inſincerity. A lady thus buſied, thus accompliſhed, becomes diſinclined to friendſhip, or unqualified for it. She has too many acquaintance to be at leiſure to have a friend. The unreſtrained communication of ſentiment, the concern of genuine ſympathy, the manifeſtation of kind affections by deeds of kindneſs, require time, and calmneſs, and deliberation, and retirement. They require what diſſipation is leaſt able and leaſt willing to beſtow.

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There ſeems at preſent to be an opinion gaining ground in high life, that in viſiting, no leſs than in amuſements, it is neceſſary that all polite ladies ſhould go every-whither; an opinion among the moſt pernicious of thoſe which pervade the modern ſyſtem of faſhionable manners. Hence it ariſes that women of amiable and excellent character are often ſeen to frequent routs, and other ſimilar meetings, in houſes, the miſtreſſes of which they hold in merited abhorrence. This conſequence alone might be ſufficient to manifeſt the miſchievous tendency of the opinion from which it flows. But the ſame erroneous perſuaſion contributes alſo to confirm many women in their practice of hurrying, evening after evening, from company to company, from diverſion to diverſion; deprives them of all deſire and all opportunity of reflection on the tempers and diſpoſitions of their own hearts; and incapacitates them for tranquil recreations and rational employments.

Next to thoſe principles of Chriſtian "ſobriety," which the Scriptures again and again inculcate on women, whether ſingle or in matrimonial life, as well in precepts addreſſed immediately to the female ſex (*p*), as in others directed to Chriſtians in general (*q*), one of the moſt powerful preſervatives againſt this prevailing abuſe of time, and all its unhappy effects on the mind, is a ſettled habit of methodical employment. Let it be founded on a fair review of the ſeveral duties daily to be performed, and of their relative nature and importance. To devote with regularity certain hours to certain purpoſes may be ſomewhat more difficult in the crowd and hurry of the metropolis, than in the tranquillity of a rural reſidence. But the ſame circumſtances, which cauſe the difficulty of adhering to a predetermined plan, prove the neceſſity of inſtituting one and of obſerving it. For how would that,

(*p*) Titus, ii. 4.—1 Tim. ii. 9. 15.—iii. 11.

(*q*) 1 Theſ. v. 6. 8.—1 Peter, i. 13.—iv. 7.—v. 8. —&c. &c.

which

which can ſcarcely be attained even with the aid of method and habit, be accompliſhed if left to depend on chance? Not that adherence to plan is to be carried to the punctilious exceſs of never tolerating the ſmalleſt deviation. But the danger of acquiring a cuſtom of deviating, and of thus being gradually ſeduced from your reſolution, is ſo formidable, that ſome occaſional inconveniences may well be endured in order to avoid it. In methodiſing time, as in all plans of life, let the ſtandard which you propoſe to yourſelf be reaſonable, if you would find it uſeful. Cheat not yourſelf into indolence by aiming at little. Neither let your deſire to perform much lead you into the error of ſetting yourſelf to imitate a pattern, which you are aware is carried to an extreme, with the view that notwithſtanding your probable deficiencies you may ſtill reach what you already diſcern to be the proper medium. This is not ſober and rational conduct. It is to attempt to prevent yourſelf from ſeeing what you cannot but ſee. It is to try

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to impoſe on yourſelf by a ſcheme which you know to be an artifice. It is to prepare pretexts for remiſſneſs, and temptations to abandon the whole undertaking. Proceed according to the plain dictates of common ſenſe. Trace out to yourſelf the exact line which your judgement tells you that you ought to follow, and endeavour to purſue it with accuracy. Remember your domeſtic duties; inform your mind; ſeek to advance in piety; be not ſnatched into the wild vortex of amuſements; dare to refuſe an invitation. Be not ſhaken from your rational purpoſes and rational mode of life, by the ſurpriſe, the ridicule, the ſpecious but hollow arguments, of the giddy and diſſipated of your own ſex; who "think it ſtrange (*r*) that ye run not "with them to the ſame exceſs of riot," and like thoſe whom the Apoſtle deſcribes, if they cannot perſuade or allure, will probably ſtrive to "ſpeak evil of you." Leave them to their folly and their unhap-

(*r*) 1 Peter, iv. 4.

pineſs;

pineſs; and purſue ſteadily the dictates of your underſtanding and your conſcience. Comply not with any thing which you deem intrinſically wrong in order to gain the good word of multitudes. Incur not the guilt of thoſe who "loved the praiſe "of men (of human beings) more than "the praiſe of God (*s*)." Retrench the intercourſe of form within narrow limits. Cultivate the affections of the heart. In the vaſt concourſe of the capital, there are numbers of your own ſex, and of a ſtation correſponding to that which you occupy, who are worthy of your friendſhip. Cheriſh ſuch friendſhips as inſtruments of comfort, of virtue, and of uſefulneſs. Co-operate, procure co-operation, in aiding not only with your purſe but with the influence, be it greater or ſmaller, which your ſituation poſſeſſes, public and private inſtitutions of Charity; and thoſe in particular which are calculated for the relief of female diſtreſs. Mindful of the ſcarcity of modes of employment in which

(*s*) John, xii. 43.

perſons

perſons of the female ſex can properly engage for a ſubſiſtence (*t*), encourage women in all ſuch occupations by ſteady and active preference. You can ſcarcely render to your own ſex a more important benefit. In relieving the temporal affliction of your fellow-creatures, forget not the higheſt office of Charity, that of providing for their religious improvement. Extend your reſearches and your beneficence to the villages and hamlets thickly ſtrewn round the metropolis, and corrupted by its vicinity. Do good by exertion and by example; be a bleſſing to others and to yourſelf.

Another temptation which attends women who reſide in London, and who are entitled to mix in the higher circles of life,

(*t*) This evil might be conſiderably leſſened. Several kinds of ſhops, now chiefly in the poſſeſſion of men, might be conducted with eaſe by women. Would not propriety alſo be conſulted by a transfer of ſome occupations from the former ſex to the latter? Why has the indelicate cuſtom of ladies employing hair-dreſſers of the other ſex been tolerated ſo long?

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originates from this circumſtance; that the capital is the ſeat of Government, the centre of political power and political intelligence. Hence the deſire which women are prone to feel of aſſociating more and more with perſons of rank, a deſire which on many occaſions is of itſelf ſufficiently ſeductive to betray them into extravagance and indiſcretion, derives an additional ſtimulus. It is among Peereſſes and the wives of Members of Parliament, and thoſe whoſe huſbands diſcharge the executive functions of Government, or are ſtationed in ſome of the ſubordinate departments of office, that we are to look for the perſons whom the rage of politics ſeizes firſt. At their own houſes, and at the houſes of their near connections, they are accuſtomed to hear queſtions relating to the national welfare canvaſſed. They witneſs a miniature reſemblance of the Parliamentary debate of the preceding evening. They become perſonally acquainted with ſome of the public characters, whom eloquence and talents have

elevated into fame. To liſten to the cenſure and to the applauſe ſeverally beſtowed on individuals in the political world, while it excites and nouriſhes curioſity, pleaſes and foments the ſpirit of party. To be addreſſed in private circles, though it be only on the ſtate of the weather, by him whom Senates have admired, ſtimulates while it gratifies ambition. By degrees they catch the paſſions of the other ſex, and are transformed into profeſſed partiſans; and when the change has once taken place, generally exceed their huſbands in violence, and bitterneſs, and a prying ſpirit. To worm out a political ſecret, to extract from the higheſt authority the earlieſt tidings of a victory, of a defeat, of a projected diſmiſſion from office, of an intended penſion or grant of nobility, is an object which calls forth the utmoſt exertions of their adroitneſs. When they have attained it, the pride of triumph commences. They haſten from dreſſing-room to dreſſing-room, from aſſembly to aſſembly, ſpreading the news as they

they fly along, exaggerating the truth to heighten aſtoniſhment, and confounding their rivals with the blaze of ſuperior intelligence. In the mean time their attention is not blind to more ſubſtantial acquiſitions. They omit neither addreſs nor importunity towards men in power, when there is a hope that the one or the other may affect the diſtribution of preferment. To obtain a living, an appointment, a ſtep in naval or in military promotion, for a relation or a dependent, affords them the double delight of conferring an obligation on a perſon whom they are deſirous to ſerve, and of diſplaying their intereſt with the rulers of the ſtate. The ſpirit of freedom and of reſpect for popular opinion, by which the Engliſh Conſtitution and Government were happily diſtinguiſhed from the ancient monarchy of France; and the ſpirit of ſteadineſs and order by which they have been diſtinguiſhed no leſs happily from the modes of political adminiſtration by which the French monarchy has been

ſucceeded, have precluded the ladies of this country from advancing to thoſe enormous lengths in political intrigue, which have been ſucceſsfully attempted on the Continent. The pattern, however, exhibited at Paris, has long been imitated in London as nearly as circumſtances would allow. In proportion as the example of ladies in the higheſt circles affords encouragement to vanity or to hope; it is ſtudied and followed by numbers of their female acquaintance, whoſe ſituation gives them an opportunity of treading, though at an humble diſtance, in the ſame ſteps. Even women who have no connection with the political hemiſphere are ſeen to be inſpired by the paſſion communicated from their ſuperiors; imbibe the quinteſſence of political attachment and antipathy; and by the ardour with which they copy the only part of their model which they have the means of emulating, ſhew that it is not through want of ambition that they are left behind in the race.

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It may, indeed, be ſtated generally that, in conſequence of the peculiar circumſtances already ſpecified, by which the capital is diſtinguiſhed, the love of eminence and the thirſt of admiration are there rouſed by incitements far more powerful than any other place could ſupply. Hence, whatever be the object to which female ambition is directed; whether it aſpire to be conſpicuous as the leader of faſhion and the oracle of politeneſs; or as the ſtately aſſociate of rank and dignity, to outſhine all its competitors in the diſplay of magnificence; or to anticipate them in the knowledge of political tranſactions, and drive them from the field in every ſtruggle for the acquiſition of political favours; it is in the metropolis that it hurries its votary to unparalleled extremes of folly, of pride, of envy, of extravagance. The eſtimation in which the Scriptures hold ſuch paſſions and ſuch conduct, or, to ſpeak with more propriety, the judgements there denounced againſt them, have been noticed already in ſuch a

manner, that they muſt be freſh in the reader's recollection. Let us for once attend to advice from the mouth of a Pagan, addreſſed to the ladies of the moſt polite city of antient times. "Be ambitious of attaining thoſe virtues which "are the principal ornaments of your "ſex. Cheriſh your inſtinctive modeſty; "and look upon it as your higheſt commendation not to be the ſubject of public diſcourſe (*u*)."

That inſtinctive modeſty, ſo deſerving of being cheriſhed, requires, like every other virtue, to be ſtrengthened by culture; and is perhaps of all virtues that which, when impaired, is the moſt difficult to be reſtored to its original ſenſibility. In the rude conflicts of the world it is expoſed to ſerious riſk of being imperceptibly worn away. In the metropolis the danger is aggravated partly by the ſhameleſſneſs with which vice, confident in its numbers, there ſhews

(*u*) Speech of Pericles to the Athenian women. Thucydides, Book ii.

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its face abroad; partly by the rank of many of the vicious, which draws on their wickedneſs the eye of public attention; and partly by means of the ſoftening appellations which faſhion, enliſted in the ſervice of profligacy, has deviſed for the moſt flagrant breaches of the laws of God and man. Hence, not only among the unprincipled, but in virtuous families, among women of modeſty, and by women of modeſty, converſation is not unfrequently turned to criminal topics and incidents, of which, to uſe the language of an Apoſtle, "it is a "ſhame even to ſpeak (*x*)." To conceive that delicacy of ſentiment ſhould not thus be undermined is impoſſible. The evil now in queſtion contaminates the country alſo; but, though not reſtricted to the metropolis, it is there moſt prevalent. It ought to be added, that men of worth are, in numberleſs caſes, highly cenſurable for the little regard which they evince to female delicacy even in their own families, by the ſubjects

(*x*) Epheſ. v. 12.

of converſation which they introduce or purſue. The miſchief done is not the leſs, becauſe the phraſeology may be guarded.

The habits of life which prevail in the metropolis, and particularly in faſhionable families, are, in ſeveral reſpects, totally repugnant to the cultivation of affection and connubial happineſs. The huſband and the wife are ſyſtematically kept aſunder. Separate eſtabliſhments, ſeparate ſets of acquaintance, ſeparate amuſements, all conſpire to render them firſt ſtrangers, and afterwards indifferent, to each other. If they find themſelves brought together in mixed company, to be mutually cold, inattentive, and forbidding, is politeneſs. They who are inſpired, or are ſuppoſed to be inſpired, with the warmeſt attachment, are reciprocally to behave with a degree of repulſive unconcern, which, if exhibited towards a third perſon, would be conſtrued as an affront. The truth is, that ſuch unnatural maxims of behaviour have originated from caſes in which, however blamable, they

they were not artificial. They have ſprung from that indifference which was really felt. But thoſe perſons who are ſolicitous to preſerve affection, will do well to cheriſh the outward manifeſtations of regard. Be it admitted, on the one hand, that it is poſſible to diſguſt by an ill-timed diſplay of the familiarity of fondneſs. But let it be remembered, on the other, that to diſguiſe the natural feelings of the heart under the ſyſtematic reſtraints of aſſumed coldneſs, is offenſive to every rational obſerver; at variance with ſimplicity and ingenuouſneſs of character; and ultimately ſubverſive of the tenderneſs of affection both in the party which practiſes the diſguiſe, and in the perſon towards whom it is practiſed.

The influence of faſhion, which of late has unhappily contributed in the metropolis to ſeparate the huſband and the wife, would have flowed in a more beneficial channel, had it been applied to draw cloſer the bands of domeſtic ſociety. The wives of lawyers, of phyſicians, and of ſeveral other deſcrip-

tions of men, are ſeldom allowed a large ſhare of the company of their huſbands. While the latter are occupied abroad by profeſſional buſineſs, the former are left expoſed to the temptations of a diſſipated capital, temptations which borrow ſtrength from the wearineſs of ſolitude at home. Hence, in addition to the common obligations which preſs on the conſcience of the married man, and bind him to ſtudy the comfort and the welfare of his partner, the huſband thus circumſtanced is under yet another tie to ſpend his leiſure in the boſom of his family. Hence alſo the duty of the wife to render home, by the winning charms of her behaviour, attractive and delightful to her huſband, derives additional force. Let her conſider the numberleſs temptations to vice, to profuſion, to idle amuſement, with which he is encompaſſed. Let her remember with what various characters the buſineſs of his ſtation renders him familiar; of whom ſome perhaps openly deride the principles of religion; others ſap them by inſidious machinations; others

extenuate

extenuate by their wit and talents the offenſiveneſs of guilt; others add to the ſeducing example of gay wickedneſs the faſcinations of rank and popularity. Is ſhe deſirous of his ſociety? Would ſhe confirm him in domeſtic habits? Would ſhe fortify him againſt being allured into the haunts of luxury, riot, and profaneneſs? Let her conduct ſhew that home is dear to herſelf in his abſence, ſtill dearer when he is preſent. Let her unaffected mildneſs, her ingenuous tenderneſs, place before his mind a forcible contraſt to the violence, the artifice, the unfeeling ſelfiſhneſs, which he witneſſes in his commerce with the world. Let the cheerful tranquillity of domeſtic pleaſures ſtand in the place of trifling and turbulent feſtivity abroad. Let his houſe, as far as her endeavours can be effectual, be the abode of happineſs; and he will ſurely have little temptation to bewilder himſelf in ſeeking for happineſs under another roof.

There are motives of health or convenience which occaſionally determine individuals,

viduals, buſied in mercantile concerns, rather to fix themſelves at a country reſidence within a few miles of London than in the heart of the city; and thence to pay daily viſits to their counting-houſes in town. To the wives of perſons thus circumſtanced, the obſervations in the preceding paragraph may be addreſſed. It may indeed be ſaid generally, that the turn of mind and the habits of life in the immediate neighbourhood of the capital are naturally become ſo far ſimilar to thoſe prevalent in St. James's-ſquare, that almoſt every remark on moral duties, which is applicable to the latter ſituation, may be transferred to the former.

One of the duties which require to be expreſsly ſtated as incumbent on ladies who paſs a large portion of the year in the metropolis, and eſpecially on ladies of rank and influence, is the following; to endeavour to improve the general tone of ſocial intercourſe, and particularly in the article of amuſements. Let them exchange the vaſt and promiſcuous aſſemblages, which now

now crowd their ſuite of rooms from evening almoſt to day-break, for ſmall and ſelect parties, to which a virtuous character ſhall be a neceſſary introduction, and in which virtuous friendſhip and rational entertainment may be enjoyed. Let them diſcountenance the prevailing ſyſtem of late hours, which undermine the conſtitution; and entail languor and idleneſs on that period of the day, which they who have not adopted the modern and deſtructive cuſtom of late-riſing know to be the moſt delightful and the moſt uſeful. Let them ſet up a ſtandard againſt play, faſhionable follies, and enſnaring cuſtoms; and unite the innocent pleaſures of improving and entertaining ſociety with the ſmalleſt poſſible expenſe of time, money, and domeſtic order. The benefits which might accrue to the youth of both ſexes from the amelioration of the general ſtate of meetings for purpoſes of converſation and amuſement in polite circles are incalculable. The proſpect of a happy ſettlement in life for individuals, their domeſtic conduct, their domeſtic comfort, the manners and habits of various

claſſes

claſſes of the community prone to imbibe the opinions and to copy the example of their immediate ſuperiors; all theſe are circumſtances which that amelioration would contribute to improve.

In the metropolis, the morals of ſervants are expoſed to extraordinary dangers. By common temptations they are there beſet more powerfully than in the country; and have alſo to contend with others peculiar to the capital. Yet it is, perhaps, in London that they receive the leaſt attention from maſters and miſtreſſes of families. The proper inference to be drawn from theſe facts is obvious. Act conformably to it in all points. Let not your domeſtics of either ſex be ſuffered to depend for a part of their emoluments on the perquiſites of gaming. Let them be guarded to the utmoſt of your power againſt the irreparable miſchiefs which attend the practice of inſuring in ſtate lotteries (*y*).

(*y*) For ſome account of thoſe miſchiefs, ſee the "Treatiſe on the Police of the Metropolis," 2d Edit. p. 163—169.

Ladies

Ladies who, being united to men occupied in the tranſactions of trade and buſineſs, find themſelves reſident in the city, often ſhew that they are extremely diſſatisfied with their ſituation. Accumulating riches repay them not for the apprehenſion of imputed vulgarity. Each wearies her huſband with importunate earneſtneſs that he would renounce the degrading profits of the counting-houſe and the ſhop, which he is now wealthy enough to deſpiſe; and exchange the ungenteel dulneſs of Lombard-ſtreet for the modiſh vicinity of the court. Affecting to look down on the polite world; deriding the barren rent-rolls of encumbered eſtates, apparent to their imaginations through the veil of ſuperficial ſplendor; they are eager to ape the follies and to crowd into the ſociety of the gilded ſwarm which they would ſeem to hold in contempt. Ladies of faſhion in the mean time are exulting, at the other end of the town, that the hands of their huſbands were never contaminated with the filthy gains of commerce; and delight in turning into ridicule

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the awkward efforts of the citizen's wife to rival the aſſembly and the public breakfaſt of the Peereſs by expenſe void of propriety, and pomp deſtitute of taſte. It is thus that pride and envy, diſplaying themſelves under oppoſite forms, are equally conſpicuous in both parties.

When the period of reſidence in the metropolis is come to a concluſion, a lady is ſometimes apt to diſplay among her neighbours in the country, in a manner which cannot be miſtaken, her conſciouſneſs that ſhe is lately arrived from the centre of faſhion and politeneſs. Her pride betrays itſelf under various aſpects and modifications according to the particular ſhades of her temper and diſpoſitions, and the reſpective circumſtances of the individuals thrown into her ſociety. Sometimes it appears without diſguiſe in ſupercilious ſtatelineſs. Sometimes it is revealed by the inſolence of affected condeſcenſion. At one time, it expatiates on the intimacies which it has formed, or profeſſes to have

formed,

formed, in high life; and deſcribes the perſons, particulariſes the characters, and retails the converſation of peers and peereſſes. At another, it officiouſly ſhews itſelf to be lowering the tone of diſcourſe to the level of the country; and with a parade of attention turns aſide from ſubjects, with which it gives the company preſent to underſtand that they are not ſuppoſed to be acquainted. The contempt which airs of this nature evince, is ever found to recoil on thoſe who practiſe them.

A lady, when ſhe leaves London, ought to be careful not to corrupt the country by the introduction of fooliſh and culpable faſhions. Her example, whichever way it turns, is likely to have conſiderable weight. In the metropolis ſhe was only one in a crowd. Even there it was her duty invariably to recollect that her conduct would by no means be without influence on others; that the whole maſs was compoſed of individuals; and that each individual was reſponſible for an individual ſhare. But

when ſhe comes down to the family manſion, the eyes of the neighbourhood will, for a time, be turned upon herſelf. If ſhe import a cargo of modiſh follies and modiſh vices, they will ſoon be diffuſed throughout the diſtrict in which ſhe reſides. If ſhe neither introduce them herſelf, nor adopt them though they ſhould be introduced into the vicinity; her friends and her acquaintance, thoſe who ſee her and thoſe who hear of her, will then dare not to give into them.

Among perſons of the female ſex who reſide conſtantly in the country, and at the ſame time poſſeſs few opportunities of mixing with poliſhed and intelligent ſociety, errors and failings originate, no leſs than among men, from the want of enlarged ſentiments and a greater knowledge of the world. Prejudice ſhews itſelf in various ſhapes, and extends to a multitude of objects. Changes in manners and cuſtoms, though in reality for the better, are reprobated. The conduct of others, eſpecially

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of thoſe who move in a higher circle, is judged with acrimony. Little allowance is made for unſeen motives and unknown circumſtances. The ſpirit of party broods over imaginary offences. Sometimes its operations are more active: inſomuch that ladies, inſtigated by vanity, and liſtening with greedy attention to the flatteries of ſome intereſted partizan of the other ſex, who enlarges on the advantages which their interference would ſecure to a favourite candidate at an election, are ſeen to plunge into the rude intercourſe and degrading occupations of a local conteſt. In ſmall towns, and in their immediate neighbourhood, the ſpirit of detraction ever appears with ſingular vehemence. In the metropolis, and in other large cities, it may perhaps be no leſs active. There, however, its activity is diſperſed amidſt the crowd of individuals whom it aſſails. It has there ſuch an overflowing abundance of delinquents, or ſuppoſed delinquents, to purſue, that perſons who are not conſpicuous in the routine of faſhion, nor by any other inci-

dent particularly drawn forth into public notice, have a reaſonable chance of eſcaping very frequent attacks. But here the ſmallneſs of the circle renders all who move in it univerſally known to each other. The objects on which curioſity can exerciſe her talents are ſo few, that ſhe never withdraws her eye from any of them long: and ſhe already knows ſo much reſpecting each, that ſhe cannot reſt until ſhe has learned every thing. Nor is this all. Among the females who are acting their parts on ſo no narrow a ſtage, claſhings, and competitions, and diſſenſions, will have been frequent; and grudges of antient date are revived to ſupply food for preſent malevolence and ſcandal.

A propenſity to puſh faſhions in dreſs to abſurd extremes is alſo very frequent in country towns. Ladies who have been converſant with the polite world know that, however generally a particular mode may be prevalent, much latitude is ſtill left to inclination and taſte; and that a moderate degree of conformity is always ſuffi-

cient to ward off the charge of ſingularity. But they who have ſeen leſs, or have been leſs obſervant, are in common ſo little aware either of this truth, or of the preciſe limits within which the exiſting mode is circumſcribed, that in their zeal to outvie each other, and their dread of falling ſhort of the pattern exhibited in high life, they puſh their attempts at imitation to a prepoſterous exceſs. And while they are exulting in the thought that their head-dreſs is conſtructed, and their gown cut out and trimmed, preciſely according to the lateſt model diſplayed by the arbiters of faſhion in the capital; they would find, if they could tranſplant themſelves into a public room in the metropolis, their appearance an extravagant caricature of the decorations of which they had conceived it to be an accurate reſemblance.

Some of the duties and temptations ſeverally pertaining to different married women in conſequence of profeſſional differences in the ſituations of their huſbands remain to be conſidered.

It may be proper to direct our attention, in the firſt place, to the wives of clergymen. St. Paul, ſpeaking of the miniſters of the Goſpel from the biſhop to the deacon, adverts particularly to the conduct of their wives; and expreſsly requires, that they be "grave, not ſlanderous, ſober, faithful in all things (z)." Not that any one of the virtues, which ought to ornament the wife of the clergyman, is not alſo required of every woman. But the Apoſtle well knew that the want of any of them would prove, in the way of example, far more prejudicial in the wife of a clergyman than in another perſon. Hence the repeated injunctions which he delivers to the teachers of Chriſtianity, that they ſhould "rule well their own families (*a*)." Hence too the promiſe given by every clergyman of the eſtabliſhed Church of England at his admiſſion into holy orders, that he will "frame and faſhion his *family*, "as well as himſelf, according to the doc-"trine of Chriſt; that both may be whole-

(z) 1 Tim. iii. 11. (*a*) 1 Tim. iii. 4, 5. 12.

"ſome

" ſome examples and patterns to his " flock (*b*)." If a clergyman, he whoſe office it is to guide others from the follies and corruptions of the world into the way of ſalvation, to " let his light ſo ſhine be- " fore men that they may ſee his good " works and glorify," by imitating them, " his Father who is in heaven (*c*)," forget that branch of his ſacred function; if he indulge, I will not ſay in groſs vices, but in thoſe lighter inſtances of miſconduct, which are yet ſufficient to evince that religion holds not an undiſputed predominance in his heart; the dulleſt underſtanding is quick-ſighted enough to diſcern his faults, and to avail itſelf of the pretences which they may be repreſented as affording for criminal indulgences in others. This obſervation may be extended in a certain degree to the example diſplayed by his family, more eſpecially to that exhibited by his wife. Does ſhe, who is the conſtant companion of a miniſter of religion, ſhe who, in addition to the motives

(*b*) See the office of ordination. (*c*) Mat. v. 6.

which preſs on all "women profeſſing "godlineſs (*d*)," all women who profeſs to believe and practiſe Chriſtianity, is urged by peculiar obligations to the attainment of Chriſtian excellence, prove herſelf actuated by a worldly temper? Is ſhe aſpiring, vain, giddy, calumnious, avaricious, or unforgiving? She tranſgreſſes the laws of her Saviour, and diſregards the ſpirit of the Goſpel, with ſtrong circumſtances of aggravation; and contributes not a little to leſſen the general effect of her huſband's inſtructions from the pulpit. Such is the conſequence of her defects, whatever be the ſtation which the perſon to whom ſhe is united may occupy in the church. In proportion to the eminence of that ſtation, the miſchief of her bad example is increaſed. On the other hand, if religion have its genuine effect on her manners and diſpoſitions; if it render her humble and mild, benevolent and candid, ſedate, modeſt and devout; if it withdraw her inclinations from faſhionable foibles and fa-

(*d*) 1 Tim. ii. 10.

ſhionable

ſhionable expences; if it lead her to activity in ſearching out and alleviating the wants of the neighbouring poor; and in promoting, according to her ſituation and ability, ſchools and other inſtitutions for the advancement of religion, and the encouragement of induſtry among the children in the dioceſe or the pariſh committed to her huſband; ſhe is a "fellow-labourer" with him "in the Goſpel." She prepares the hearts of all who liſten to his inſtructions and exhortations to receive them without prejudice; and attracts others to the ſpirit of Chriſtianity by the amiable luſtre which it diffuſes round herſelf.

Hiſtory affirms that, in the days of Queen Elizabeth, the wives of the prelates manifeſted no ſmall diſſatisfaction at not being permitted to ſhare with their huſbands the honors and privileges of nobility; and that they applied with earneſt but ineffectual ſolicitude to procure the removal of the fancied degradation. It is to the credit of the wives of modern biſhops

biſhops that ſo few indications of a ſimilar ſpirit have appeared among them, as rarely, if ever, to have been held up to public notice, even by thoſe who have been the moſt acute in diſcovering, and the moſt active in divulging, the faults of perſons cloſely connected with epiſcopacy. In every other reſpect let them be ſhining models of unaffected humility and moderation. Never let them be induced by ties of conſanguinity, or by any other motive, to ſtrive to exert an improper influence on the judgement of their huſbands as to the diſtribution of eccleſiaſtical preferment. It is no more than equity to acknowledge that in ſeveral inſtances the wife of a biſhop is expoſed to peculiar temptations of conſiderable ſtrength. The prelate has, perhaps, little private fortune. He has been elevated from an humble condition. Though pomp and luxury be ſhunned as ſcrupulouſly as they ought to be, the unavoidable expences of his ſtation, augmented by the occaſional reſidence required from him in the capital, make deep inroads

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into his revenue. Under theſe circumſtances his wife ought to be, in common with himſelf, uniformly mindful, not only that the elevation of his family terminates with his life, but that every attempt to provide for the continuance of a portion of that elevation by ſhutting the hand of charity, and greedily hoarding almoſt every thing that can be ſaved from the annual profits of the fee, in order that the ſavings may roll up into a large fortune for his children, is utterly unjuſtifiable in the ſight of God. Was he raiſed by merit? Let her not repine that her ſons, whoſe merit, be it whatever it may, has not hitherto ſtood the teſt of time and experience, are to be reduced to the level whence he roſe. If they ſhould not have their father's ſucceſs, they may yet equal his deſert. Was he raiſed without adequate merit? Let her not regret that her children no longer poſſeſs, what in ſtrictneſs even their father ought never to have enjoyed. Let her not ſecretly murmur at the proſpect of deſcending, if ſhe ſhould ſurvive

ſurvive him, to the ſtation in which he would have left her, had he died before his advancement to the mitre. Let her be thankful to Providence for the additional good which ſhe is now enabled by the rank and ſituation of her huſband to effect both in his dioceſe and elſewhere; and without anxiety leave that Being, who at preſent entruſts her with the power, to determine whether it ſhall or ſhall not remain with her to the end of her days. The laws and uſages, which withhold from the wife of a prelate the diſtinctions of peerage, will appear, when conſidered with a reference to the caſe of her widowhood, not leſs benevolent than wiſe. The ſhock of miſfortune, as relating to outward circumſtances, is extremely diminiſhed. She can now retire without difficulty to modeſt privacy, unburdened with the real or imaginary ſources of expence with which rank and titles would have oppreſſed her. She retires encircled with the reſpect which her own virtues and thoſe of her huſband have accumulated around her; and probably

bably enriched with an acceſſion of friends whoſe attachment, were it to be put to the trial in an hour of diſtreſs, would not be found to forſake her.

Some of the temptations to which the wife of a biſhop is obnoxious, in conſequence of the temporary nature of the income which ſhe partakes, attach, in a certain meaſure, on women united to perſons who poſſeſs inferior dignities in the church, and even on the wives of private clergymen. There is, in each caſe, a continually operating inducement to be too ſparing in charity for the ſake of providing for poſterity. It is an inducement to which numbers are daily proving themſelves ſuperior: but as it acts with particular force on all deſcriptions of perſons whoſe income deſcends not to thoſe whom they leave behind, it well deſerves to be pointed out in the way of caution. Attention to lay up proviſion for the future exigencies of a family is innocent, is laudable, when reſtricted within proper bounds, in an eccleſiaſtic

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as well as in others. It is only blamable when it proceeds to exceſs; when it interferes with the reaſonable demands of benevolence. From that exceſs let the wife guard her huſband and herſelf.

The wife of an officer in the naval or in the military ſervice is, in ſeveral reſpects, expoſed to moral trials of conſiderable magnitude. In time of war ſhe is left to endure the anxieties of a long ſeparation from her huſband, while he is toiling on the ocean, or contending in a diſtant quarter of the globe with the bullets of the enemy and the maladies of the climate. The ſtate of tremulous ſuſpenſe, when the mind is ignorant of the fate of the object which it holds moſt dear, and knows not but that the next poſt may confirm the moſt dreadful of its apprehenſions, can be calmed only by thoſe conſolations which look beyond the preſent world. Let not deſpondency withhold the confidence due to the protecting Power of Him, "without "whom, not even a ſparrow falleth to the "ground."

" ground (*e*)." Let not ſolicitude queſtion the wiſdom which uniformly marks the determinations of that Being, one of whoſe characteriſtics it is to be " wonderful in " counſel (*f*):" nor affliction forget that he has promiſed that " all things ſhall " work together for good to them that " love him (*g*)." When the huſband is fighting the battles of his country, the whole management of the domeſtic œconomy of his family devolves upon his wife. Let her faithfully execute the truſt, and ſhun even a diſtant approach towards extravagance. In her whole demeanour, let her guard againſt every ſymptom of levity, every trace of inadvertence, which might give riſe to the miſconceptions of ignorance, or awaken the cenſorious tongue of malice. Let it be her conſtant object that, if it ſhall pleaſe the Divine Providence to reſtore her huſband, ſhe may preſent herſelf before him at leaſt as worthy of his eſteem and love as ſhe was when he left

(*e*) Matth. x. 29.
(*f*) Iſaiah, xxviii. 29.
(*g*) Romans, viii. 28.

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her. The wife of the military officer has ſometimes to encounter new and peculiar temptations, at times when ſhe is not ſeparated from her huſband. Various circumſtances frequently concur to lead her through the viciſſitudes of a wandering life, in accompanying him ſucceſſively from one country town where he is quartered to another; and occaſionally fix her during the time of war in the vicinity of the camp where his regiment is poſted. Diſuſe to a ſettled home, and the want of thoſe domeſtic occupations and pleaſures which no place of reſidence but a ſettled home can ſupply, tend to create a fondneſs for roving, an eagerneſs for amuſement, an inveterate propenſity to card-playing, and an averſion to every kind of reading, except the peruſal of the miſchievous traſh which the circulating library pours forth for the entertainment of a mind unaccuſtomed to reflection. It unfortunately happens too, that, in this ſituation, her ſociety is not ſufficiently compoſed of

perſons

perſons of her own ſex. Feminine reſerve, delicacy of manners, and even delicacy of ſentiment, are in extreme danger of being worn away by living in habits of familiar intercourſe with a crowd of officers; among whom it is to be expected that there will be ſome who are abſolutely improper, and more who are very undeſirable aſſociates. Duty and affection may in certain caſes render it neceſſary, that a married lady ſhould ſtand the brunt of theſe temptations. But the conſequent danger ſhould excite her to unwearied and univerſal circumſpection; and warn her to cultivate with unremitting vigilance thoſe habits of privacy, and of uſeful and methodical employment, without which female diffidence, purity of heart, and a capacity for the enjoyment and the communication of domeſtic happineſs, will ſcarcely be found to ſurvive.

The wife of a manufacturer, or of a perſon engaged in any branch of trade productive of conſiderable gain, is likewiſe

ſubjected by her own ſituation and that of her huſband to moral duties and trials, which require to be briefly noticed. If her huſband has raiſed himſelf by ſucceſs in his buſineſs to a ſtate of affluence and credit much ſuperior to that which he originally poſſeſſed, and in particular if he has thus raiſed himſelf from very low beginnings; his wife is not unfrequently puffed up with the pride which he is ſometimes found to contract during the period of his elevation; looks down with the contemptuous inſolence of proſperity on her former acquaintances and friends; frowns into ſilence the hopes and the requeſts of poor relations; and would gladly conſign to oblivion every circumſtance, which calls to mind the condition from which ſhe has been exalted. She becomes ambitious to diſplay her newly acquired wealth in the parade of dreſs, in coſtly furniture, in luxurious entertainments. Ever apprehenſive of being treated by her late equals or ſuperiors with a leſs degree of reſpect than ſhe now conceives to be her due, ſhe perpetually finds, or ſuppoſes that

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ſhe finds, what ſhe is taking ſuch pains to diſcover. If from the operation of abſurd and arrogant prejudices, which, though far leſs prevalent in modern times than heretofore, are not yet wholly extinguiſhed, ſhe be occaſionally treated by ladies of ſuperior rank and fortune with the ſupercilious airs reſerved to be exhibited towards thoſe who have recently emerged into opulence; inſtead of proving by her conduct the juſtice of the Scriptural admonition that "before "honour is humility (*b*)," ſhe fails not to convince them that her pride is equal to their own. Though ſhe may control the effervescence of her wrath, and break not forth into turbulence and outrage; ſhe broods in ſecret over the affront, and gratifies her malevolence with every thing which truth or falſehood can ſuggeſt to the detriment and diſparagement of the offending party. The diſgracefulneſs and the guilt of theſe unchriſtian tempers appear in the deepeſt colours of deformity, when con-

(*b*) Proverbs, xv. 33.

traſted with the behaviour of thoſe women who are ſeen to retain, after the largeſt acceſſions of riches and conſequence, the unaſſuming manners, the meekneſs of diſpoſition, the ſame principles, the ſame attachments, by which they were originally diſtinguiſhed.

When a large manufactory collects together, as is the caſe in cotton mills and ſome other inſtances, a number of women and children within its walls; or draws a concourſe of poor families into its immediate vicinity, by the employment which it affords to the different parts of them; let the wife of the owner continually bear in mind that to their toil her opulence is owing. Let her remember that the obligations between the labourer and his employer are reciprocal. With cordial activity let her unite with her huſband, in all ways compatible with the offices of her ſex, to promote the comfort and welfare of his dependents by liberal charity adapted to their reſpective wants, and by all other means

which

which perſonal inſpection and inquiry may indicate as conducive to the preſervation of their health, and the improvement of their moral and religious character. The aſſemblage of multitudes is highly unfavourable to virtue. The conſtant occupations of children in a manufactory may eaſily be puſhed to an extreme, that will leave neither time nor inclination for the acquiſition of thoſe principles of chriſtian rectitude, which, if not impreſſed during childhood, are rarely gained afterwards. If ſuch occupations be carried on in the contaminated atmoſphere of crowded rooms, they ſap the conſtitution in the years deſtined according to the courſe of nature for its complete eſtabliſhment. Theſe are evils which every perſon, who has an intereſt in a manufactory, is bound by the ſtrongeſt ties of duty to prevent; or, if they exiſt already, to remove.

A ſimilar obligation reſts on the wives of tradeſmen in general, in proportion to the ability and the opportunities which they

poſſeſs of benefiting, in any of the methods which have been pointed out, the families of the workmen employed by their huſbands. If a woman have herſelf the ſuperintendence and management of the ſhop, let induſtry, punctuality, accuracy in keeping accounts, the ſcrupulouſneſs of honeſty ſhewing itſelf in a ſteady abhorrence of every manœuvre to impoſe on the cuſtomer, and all other virtues of a commercial character which are reducible to practice in her ſituation, diſtinguiſh her conduct (*i*). If her

(*i*) It is ſaid, by thoſe who have ſufficient opportunities of aſcertaining the fact, to be no unfrequent practice among the wives of ſeveral deſcriptions of ſhopkeepers in London, knowingly to demand from perſons who call to purchaſe articles for ready money, a price, when the huſband is not preſent, greater than that which he would have aſked. This overplus, if the article be bought, the wife conceals, and appropriates to her own uſe. If the cuſtomer demur at the demand, and the huſband chances to enter; the wife profeſſes to have been miſtaken, and apologiſes for the error. Thus detection is avoided. It is ſcarcely neceſſary to ſay, that the whole of the proceeding is groſs diſhoneſty and falſehood on the part of the wife. If the huſband have led her into temptation, by withholding from her an equitable ſupply of money for her proper expenſes, he

her occupation be ſuch as to occaſion young women to be placed under her roof as aſſiſtants in her buſineſs, or for the purpoſe of acquiring the knowledge of it; let her behave to them with the kindneſs of a friend, and watch over their principles and moral behaviour with the ſolicitude of a mother.

he alſo deſerves great blame. Does ſhe then attempt to juſtify herſelf on this plea? As reaſonably might ſhe allege it in defence of forgery.

CHAP. XIV.

ON PARENTAL DUTIES.

OF all the duties incumbent on mankind, there are none which recommend themſelves more powerfully to natural reaſon than thoſe of the parent. The high eſtimation in which the ſcriptures hold them is evident, from a variety of precepts, reflections, alluſions, compariſons, and incidents, in the Old and New Teſtaments. The obligations which reſt on the father and the mother, in many points the ſame, are, in ſome few reſpects, different. Thus, for example, the taſk of making a reaſonable proviſion for the future wants of children belongs, in common caſes, to the father. "If any," ſaith St. Paul, "provide not for "his own, and eſpecially for thoſe of his "own houſe, he hath denied the faith, and "is

" is worſe than an infidel (*k*);" he diſobeys one of the cleareſt injunctions of Chriſtianity, and omits to diſcharge an office, which Pagans in general would have been aſhamed of neglecting. That theſe words of the Apoſtle include parents, is a truth which will not be queſtioned. They are now quoted not for the ſake of inculcating the particular obligation to which they relate, but for the ſake of an inference which they furniſh. They enable us to conclude, with certainty, what would have been the language of St. Paul, had he been led expreſsly to deliver his ſentiments concerning mothers regardleſs of maternal duties.

In the former part of this work, when the education of young women and their introduction into general ſociety were the ſubjects under diſcuſſion, ſeveral of the moſt important topics of parental duty, being inſeparably connected with thoſe ſubjects, were illuſtrated and enforced. It remains now to

(*k*) 1 Tim. v. 8.

ſubjoin

ſubjoin ſome detached remarks, which could not hitherto be commodiouſly ſtated. Like the preceding they relate to points which will preſs on the attention of a mother, whether ſharing with a huſband the duties of a parent, or called by his death to the more arduous office of fulfilling them alone.

The firſt of the parental duties which nature points out to the mother is to be herſelf the nurſe of her own offspring. In ſome inſtances, however, the parent is not endued with the powers of conſtitution requiſite for the diſcharge of it. In others the diſcharge of it would be attended with a riſk to her own health greater than ſhe ought to encounter when it can be avoided. In every ſuch caſe the general obligation ceaſes. The diſappointment which will be felt by maternal tenderneſs, ought to be borne without repining; and without indulging apprehenſions reſpecting the welfare of the infant, which experience has proved to be needleſs. But ſpontaneouſly to tranſfer

fer to a ſtranger, as modern example dictates, the office of nurturing your child, when your health and ſtrength are adequate to the undertaking; to transfer it that your indolence may not be diſturbed, or that your paſſion for amuſement may not be crippled in its exertions; is to evince a moſt ſhameful degree of ſelfiſhneſs and unnatural inſenſibility. When affection fails even in this firſt trial, great reaſon have we to forebode the abſence of that diſpoſition to ſubmit to perſonal ſacrifices, which will be found indiſpenſably neceſſary to the performance of the ſubſequent duties of a parent.

Whether a mother be or be not able to rear her offspring at her own breaſt, conſcience and natural feelings unite in directing her to exerciſe that general ſuperintendence over the conduct of all the inhabitants of the nurſery, which is requiſite to preſerve her infant from ſuffering by neglect, by the prejudices of ignorance, or by the immoderate officiouſneſs of care.

When

When the dawning intellect begins to unfold itſelf, the office of parental inſtruction commences. The diſpoſitions of a child are ſuſceptible of very early culture: and much trouble and much unhappineſs may be prevented by nipping in the bud the firſt ſhoots of caprice, obſtinacy, and paſſion, and by inſtilling and cheriſhing amiable ſentiments and habits. The twig, however young and tender, may be bent and faſhioned by the hand of gentleneſs. The mind ſoon learns by habit to expect diſcipline; and ere long begins to diſcipline itſelf. By degrees the young pupil acquires the capacity of underſtanding the general reaſons of the parent's commands, denials, commendations, and reproofs: and they ſhould be communicated in moſt caſes in which they can be comprehended. Among theſe reaſons, obedience to God, the love of him, and a deſire to pleaſe him, together with other motives derived from Chriſtianity, ſhould hold the pre-eminence which they deſerve; and ſhould be early preſented to the infant mind in ſtrong and attractive

attractive colours. Religion is thus engrafted through the divine co-operation into the nature of children ſoon after their original paſſions begin to work; and may be expected to become a more vigorous plant, and to arrive at a more fruitful maturity, than could have been hoped if the commencement of its growth had been delayed to a later period. Thus a child is trained up from the firſt "in "the way in which he ſhould go." And by a continuance of the ſame care, ſtill in humble dependence on the bleſſing of God, there is the faireſt proſpect that "he "will keep in it unto the end." To make a right impreſſion on the opening mind, Religion ſhould appear with an awful and an amiable aſpect: liberal of the moſt precious gifts, and delighted to confer them; yet reſolved to puniſh, if her offers be ſlighted and her commands diſobeyed. Let parents beware of partial and unfair repreſentations of the will and counſel of God in order to obtain ſome preſent end. Perhaps we may always

diſcern, that moſt good is effected by unfolding the entire and unſophiſticated truth. But if parents imagine otherwiſe, God is wiſer than man. And they may be certain that the Revelation, which he has vouchſafed for the inſtruction and ſalvation of mankind, is far more likely to accompliſh the intended object when laid before old and young, rich and poor, in its true colours; than when diſguiſed by man, the better, as he conceives, to anſwer a preſent purpoſe. Kindneſs to bear with ſlow and feeble apprehenſion, perfect freedom from irritability and capriciouſneſs, care to ſhun involuntary abſence of thought, patience not weary of attending to minute objects and minute opportunities, and ſteadineſs never to be won by mere entreaty, or teaſed by importunity, from its original right determination, are among the qualifications at all periods, and eſpecially at the period of which we now ſpeak, eſſential to the parent.

As

As childhood advances, the opening faculties are employed under maternal direction on the rudiments of knowledge. The parent in theſe days poſſeſſes, in the variety of elementary tracts of modern date, advantages of which, when ſhe herſelf was a child, her preceptreſs was deſtitute. The firſt principles of religion are inculcated in a mode adapted to intereſt attention; and information on many other ſubjects is couched under the form of dialogue and narrative ſuited to the comprehenſion and amuſing to the imagination of the pupil. A proper ſelection from the multitude of little publications, differing materially as to intrinſic worth, requires no large portion of time and trouble. Where caution is eaſy, negligence is in the ſame proportion reprehenſible. In exerciſing the child in books which contain a manifeſt admixture of defective and erroneous obſervations, (and ſuch is the caſe with almoſt every performance,) great care ſhould be taken to repreſent and explain the ſubject of them to the child in a proper light. And every opportunity

portunity thus afforded of arming the young mind againſt faults, which it muſt afterwards encounter in life, ſhould be ſeized and employed to the utmoſt advantage.

The time now arrives, when the regular buſineſs of education, in all its branches, is to begin; and the great queſtion, whether it ſhall be conducted at home or abroad, is to be decided. The grounds on which that point is to be determined have been ſufficiently diſcuſſed already; and the degrees of attention reſpectively due to each of the various objects, to which youthful application is to be directed, have been explained. It is true that the chapter (*l*) to which I allude pertains excluſively to the education of girls. But the general principles there illuſtrated may be transferred, without difficulty, to the caſe of boys; and will guide the mother in the part which ſhe bears in ſettling the plan of their education. To fix that plan is an office which belongs

(*l*) Chap. iv.

jointly

jointly to both parents. But the ſuperior acquaintance which the huſband poſſeſſes with the habits and purſuits of active life, and his ſuperior inſight into thoſe attainments which will be neceſſary or deſirable for his ſons in the ſtations which they are to fill, and the profeſſions which they are to practiſe, will entitle his judgement to the ſame preponderance in determining the ſcheme of their education, as, for ſimilar reaſons, he will commonly do well to give to the opinion of his wife with reſpect to the mode of bringing up his daughters.

If domeſtic circumſtances be ſuch, that the girls are to be ſent to a boarding-ſchool, let not the mother be influenced in her choice by the example of high life and faſhion; nor by the practice of her neighbours and acquaintance; nor by a groundleſs partiality for the ſpot where ſhe was herſelf placed for inſtruction. Let her remember what are the objects of prime importance in education, and give the pre-

ference to the ſeminary where they are moſt likely to be thoroughly attained. Let not the difficulty of aſcertaining the ſeminary worthy of that deſcription incline her to acquieſce in one which ſhe ought not to approve. Her child's happineſs in this world and in futurity is to be deemed at ſtake. The ſecondary objects of education may in a competent degree be obtained in almoſt every place. And what is the importance of theſe when compared with that of the others? Be it remembered, that among the parents, who, in the hour of reflection, neither eſtimate accompliſhments above their true value, nor forget the peculiar temptations attached to eminence in ſuch acquirements, there are ſome whom the contagion of faſhion, and an emulous deſire of ſeeing their children diſtinguiſhed, lead to a degree of earneſtneſs and anxiety, reſpecting the proficiency of their daughters, which could be juſtified only, if ſkill in dancing, in muſic, in French, in Italian, ought to be the prime objects of human ſolicitude. Let the opportunities which vacations furniſh

be

be watchfully employed in ſupplying what is defective, in correcting what is erroneous, in ſtrengthening what is valuable, in the inſtruction conveyed and the ſentiments inculcated at the ſchool. And let the inſtructors be encouraged to general exertion, and to the greateſt exertion in points of the higheſt concern, by perceiving that the progreſs of the pupil in the various branches of improvement is obſerved with a ſteady and a diſcriminating eye.

It can ſcarcely be neceſſary to obſerve that if a daughter be educated at home, and recourſe be had to the aſſiſtance of a governeſs, much care is requiſite in the choice. To meet with a perſon tolerably qualified as to mental accompliſhments, is ſometimes not an eaſy taſk. But to find the needful accompliſhments united with ductility, with a placid temper, and with active principles of religion, is a taſk of no ſmall labour; and a taſk deſerving of the labour which it requires. Let the aſſiſtant be ever treated with friendly kind-

neſs. But let her be kept attentive to the duties of her office by the ſuperintending vigilance of the parent. And let the parent, now that ſhe is relieved from much of the buſineſs of the ſchool-room, be the more aſſiduous in thoſe maternal occupations, in which the governeſs will probably afford her leſs ſubſtantial aid, the eſtabliſhment of her daughter's religious principles, the regulation of her diſpoſitions, and the improvement of her heart.

In the government of children, the principle of fear as well as that of love is to be employed. There are parents, eſpecially mothers, who, from an amiable but extreme apprehenſion of damping filial attachment by the appearance of ſeverity, are deſirous of excluding the operation of the former. To work on the youthful mind primarily by means of the latter, and to employ the intervention of fear only in a ſubordinate degree, is unqueſtionably the way to conciliate fondneſs while authority is upheld. But among imperfect beings, conſtituted as we

we are, the maintenance of authority ſeems ever to require the aid, in a greater or a leſs degree, of the principle of fear. The Supreme Father of the Univerſe ſees fit to employ it in the moral government of mankind. On what grounds are we to hope that love ſhould prove ſufficient to ſecure to the parent the obedience of the child, when it is not of itſelf able to enſure the obedience of the parent to his Maker? In proportion as the ſpirit of religion gains a ſtronger predominance in the human breaſt, conformity to the laws of God ſprings leſs from the impulſe of fear, and more and more from the warmth of grateful love. But the imperfections of mortality muſt be put off, before we can arrive at that ſtate, in which "perfect love caſteth out fear." In like manner, as reaſon unfolds itſelf and Chriſtian views open to the mind, the child will ſtand leſs and leſs in need of poſitive control, and will be more powerfully actuated every year by an affectionate earneſtneſs to gratify the parent's deſire. But as long as the rights of parental authority

ſubſiſt, the impreſſion of awe, originally ſtamped on the boſom of the offspring, is not to be conſidered as uſeleſs. Children are diſtinguiſhed from each other by ſtriking differences in the bent of their inclinations, and in the ſtrength of their paſſions. Fear, therefore, is an inſtrument more frequently needful in the management of ſome than in that of others. But it ought never to be employed by itſelf. Whenever reproof, reſtraint, or any mode of puniſhment is requiſite; ſtill let affection be viſible. Let it be ſhewn not only by calmneſs of manner and benevolence of expreſſion, proofs which may appear not very concluſive to the child at the time when it is experiencing the effects of parental diſpleaſure; but alſo by ſtudying to convince the underſtanding of the pupil, both that the cenſure and the infliction are deſerved, and that they are intended ſolely for the ultimate good of the offender.

Let not maternal love degenerate into partiality. Children are in no reſpect more quick-

quickſighted than in diſcovering preferences in the behaviour of their parents. It is not partiality in a mother to feel a temporary preference in a caſe where merit demands it. Nor is it in all caſes wrong to avow ſuch a preference, for the purpoſe of exciting the leſs deſerving to progreſſive induſtry and virtue. For that very purpoſe, and alſo to preclude the apprehenſion of real love being impaired; let it be avowed, and let the points to which it extends be affectionately ſpecified to the leſs deſerving, if you perceive the exiſtence of it to be ſuſpected. But beware of teaching your children to vie with each other; for it is to teach them envy and malevolence. Point out, at fit opportunities, to thoſe who have not done their duty the proper conduct of thoſe who have performed it; but proceed no further. Preſs no compariſon; provoke no competition. An eminent moral writer (*n*), adverting to two oppoſite but unneceſſary evils in the ſyſtem of

(*n*) Dr. Johnſon—See Boſwell's Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides, 2d edit. p. 103.

education, has pointedly obſerved; "I would "rather have the rod to be the general ter- "ror to all to make them learn, than tell a "child if you do thus or thus, you will be "more eſteemed than your brothers or "ſiſters. By exciting emulation and com- "pariſons of ſuperiority, you lay the found- "ation of laſting miſchief. You make "brothers and ſiſters hate each other." The purpoſe of leading children to imitate what is right, and to avoid what is repre- henſible in the conduct of another, may frequently be anſwered by taking care to praiſe or cenſure the latter in the preſence of the reſt, without addreſſing the diſcourſe immediately to thoſe, who, on account of their faults, ought more eſpecially to attend to it. This method, when likely to be efficacious, is generally the moſt adviſable, as pointing leaſt to invidious compariſons: and is particularly eligible in the caſe of children, whoſe minds diſplay a proneneſs to envy and malevolence.

If I were required to ſingle out from the failings, which invade the boſom of child- hood,

hood, that which from the facility with which it is acquired and nurtured, and from its inſidious, extenſive, and durable effects on the character which it taints, calls for the moſt watchful attention from parental ſolicitude; that to which in my apprehenſion the diſtinction would be due, is art. Other faults uſually diſcloſe themſelves by indications viſible to common eyes. This is frequently found capable of eluding even the glance of penetration; and of concealing not only itſelf, but almoſt every other defect of heart and conduct with which it is aſſociated. Other faults in moſt caſes appear what they are. This continually aſſumes the ſemblance of virtue. Other faults incommode, thwart, and ſometimes contribute to weaken and correct each other. This confederates and co-operates with all. In the dawn of life it is often encouraged by the leſſons inſtilled by ſervants, who teach children to diſguiſe from their parents by indirect falſehood petty acts of miſconduct and diſobedience; and ſometimes by the indiſcretion of parents

rents themſelves, who applaud in a forward child thoſe inſtances of cunning, which either prove an inherent tendency to habits of deliberate artifice, or will eaſily pave the way for the acquiſition of them. Openneſs in acknowledging improper behaviour of any kind, is a diſpoſition to which a child ought from infancy to be led by the principles both of duty and of affection. To accept ſpontaneous confeſſion as a ſatisfaction for every fault would not be to cheriſh virtue, but to foſter guilt by teaching it a ready way to impunity. But an immediate and full avowal ought ever to be admitted as a ſtrong circumſtance of palliation; and the refuſal or neglect of it to be noticed as the addition of a ſecond and a heavy fault to the former.

Parents are ſometimes extremely imprudent both in the manner and in the ſubſtance of their converſation in the preſence of their children. If they feel a ſudden impulſe to ſpeak of ſome tranſaction which

they are aware ought not to be divulged; or to give an opinion concerning the character or conduct of an individual, while at the ſame time they are unwilling that it ſhould tranſpire; they often appear to forget the acuteneſs and intelligence which their children have attained. They attempt to obſcure the purport of their diſcourſe by whiſpers, ambiguous phraſes, and broken ſentences, which ſerve to excite the young liſteners to attention; teach them to annex importance to what they have heard; and ſtimulate them to communicate it in the nurſery, partly from an early vanity to ſhew the knowledge which they have collected, and partly from the deſire of having their curioſity gratified with the remainder of the ſtory. Sometimes the ſubject of the myſterious converſation held by the parents reſpects the child itſelf. Fondneſs cannot refrain from eulogium; while judgement ſuggeſts the conſequences of its being heard. It is therefore couched in terms, and darkened by alluſions, which the child is ſeldom at a loſs to interpret. Praiſe, height-

heightened by ineffectual attempts at diſguiſe, excites more vanity and conceit than even the imprudence of open panegyric.

But among the various ways in which the converſation held by parents in the preſence of the child has a frequent tendency to injure the diſpoſitions, and lead aſtray the judgement of the latter, the moſt dangerous, perhaps the moſt common, is yet to be ſpecified. If the ſituation of an individual of either ſex be the ſubject of diſcourſe, what are the particulars which are generally ſingled out as the moſt eminent ſources of ſatisfaction, as the moſt obvious grounds on which the perſon to whom they appertain deſerves to be felicitated by every one? Wealth, perſonal beauty, faſhionable manners, ſhewy abilities and acquirements, rich or polite connections, the proſpect of advancement, of emolument, of power. The virtues of the heart are not always omitted. Sometimes they are even diſtinguiſhed by an avowed preference. But they are praiſed

in

in cold language and with a cold countenance: while eager elocution, animated features and ſparkling eyes, and geſtures expreſſive of heartfelt approbation, perhaps of deſire or of envy, denote the relative value practically aſſigned to the two claſſes of objects of which we ſpeak. What then are the effects which will be produced on the mind of the young liſtener? Their nature, their ſtrength, and their durability no one can doubt. It is neceſſary to add that the fault in parents which has here been cenſured is not to be cured nor to be avoided merely by the exerciſe of diſcretion. This is a caſe in which no degree of diſcretion will be able to enſure habitual caution and forbearance. The evil is deeply ſeated in the heart of the parent; and to purify the heart is the only remedy. Let parents themſelves learn to prize at the higheſt rate thoſe things which are of the greateſt intrinſic worth; and then, and then only, will their converſation be ſuch as not to enſnare their children into a falſe eſtimation of objects, which have little or no real value.

During

During the years when both the body and the mind are to acquire the firmneſs which will be eſſential to each in the ſtruggles and temptations of life, let not your offspring be enfeebled and corrupted by habits of effeminate indulgence. Let them be accuſtomed to plain food, ſimple clothing, early and regular hours; to abundant exerciſe in the open air; and to as little regard of the viciſſitudes of ſeaſons as is conſiſtent with reaſonable attention to health. Let them be guarded againſt indulging timidity; and more eſpecially againſt affected apprehenſions, to which girls are frequently prone. Let humanity and mildneſs be among the principles impreſſed moſt early on their hearts. Let not the impreſſion be permitted to grow faint: and in common with all juſt and amiable impreſſions, let it be ſtrengthened by the hand of religion. Teach them to abhor the deteſtable ſports derived from the ſufferings of animals. They who are inured in their childhood to perſecute the bird or torture the inſect, will have hearts, in maturer years, prepared for barbarity to their fellow-creatures. Allow not your riſing

riſing family to contract pernicious intimacies with ſervants. But exact in their behaviour to your domeſtics a deportment invariably gentle and unaſſuming. Point out the impending hour, when all diſtinctions of rank will be at an end; when the important queſtion to each individual will not be, What ſtation in life have you occupied? but, How have you diſcharged the duties of that which you were appointed to fill?

It is an object of no ſmall importance, when the buſineſs of domeſtic education verges towards a cloſe, to proceed in ſuch a manner that the ſhackles of inſtruction may drop off by degrees; until at length what is ſtill required will probably be continued, when no longer exacted, from habit and choice. Few circumſtances can be more dangerous, than for a young woman, by being abruptly withdrawn from a ſtate of pupillage, to have a large portion of vacant time ſuddenly thrown upon her hands, and to be left to fill the

chaſm

chaſm with trifles and diſſipation. Study to lead your daughter to ſupply the place of the employments from which ſhe is gradually exonerated, by others better ſuited to her years, and if more pleaſant, yet not leſs improving, than thoſe which they ſucceed.

When your children approach to that period at which they are to be introduced into general ſociety; be it your care to cheriſh the ingenuous openneſs which by habitual openneſs on your part and every other proper method your previous conduct has been calculated, or ought to have been calculated, to inſpire. Antecedently to the Reformation, when young women were removed to their own homes from the monaſteries, in thoſe days the ſeminaries of education, in which they were inſtructed in writing, drawing, confectionary, needlework, and alſo in phyſic and ſurgery, then regarded as female accompliſhments; they were treated in a manner calculated to preclude confidence and

and friendſhip between them and their parents. "Domeſtic manners," we are told (*o*), "were ſevere and formal. A "haughty reſerve was affected by the old; "and an abject deference exacted from "the young.—Daughters, though women, "were placed like ſtatues at the cupboard; "and not permitted to ſit, or repoſe them-"ſelves otherwiſe than by kneeling on a "cuſhion, until their mother departed. "Omiſſions were puniſhed by ſtripes and "blows: and chaſtiſement was carried to "ſuch exceſs, that daughters trembled at "the ſight of their mother." Even in times not very diſtant from thoſe in which we live, it was the cuſtom for girls, when arrived at ſuch an age, as to be fully capable of bearing a part in general converſation, to be condemned to almoſt perpetual ſilence in the preſence of their parents. To guard children, whatever be their age, againſt a premature and forward aſſumption of womanhood, and againſt acquiring a habit of pert or inconſiderate loquacity, is a

(*o*) Henry's Hiſtory of England, Vol. vi. p. 648, 649.

branch of parental duty. But to encourage your daughters, and ſo much the more as they approach nearer to the time of life when they muſt act for themſelves, to an unaffected eaſe in converſation before you and a familiar interchange of ſentiment with you, is among the leaſt uncertain methods of rendering your ſociety pleaſing and inſtructive.

Though time and judgment have ſobered the exceſs of warmth and of ſenſibility by which your feelings, when you began firſt to be introduced into the world, were, like thoſe of other young people, characteriſed; let it however be apparent to your children, when at the period of life now under conſideration, that you have not forgotten what they were. To the welfare of your daughters in particular this is a point of the higheſt concern. Unleſs it be evident that you underſtand and frankly enter into the emotions, which new ſcenes and new temptations excite in their minds; how will it be practicable for you to correct the

the miſconceptions, diſpel the deluſions, and unravel the artifices, by which the fervour and inexperience of youth are enſnared? If you encounter errors occaſioned or encreaſed by ſenſibility with auſtere coldneſs, with vehement chidings, or with unbending authority that diſdains to aſſign reaſons, and to make allowance for circumſtances of mitigation; you deſtroy your own influence, and produce not conviction. Your diſapprobation is aſcribed to prejudice, to temper, to deadneſs of feeling. You are obeyed; but it is with inward reluctance, and with an augmented proneneſs to the ſtep which you have forbidden. Confidence, withdrawn from yourſelf, is tranſferred to companions of the ſame age with your child, and therefore liable to the ſame miſtakes and the ſame faults. Coincidence of ideas rivets her opinion of their judgement; friendſhip blinds her to their miſconduct. She is thus in a great meaſure removed from your hands into the hands of others, who are not likely to be qualified for the office of guiding her, and may be

in various reſpects ſuch as are likely to guide her amiſs. Her love for you may poſſibly not be radically ſhaken; but her reſpect for your determinations, her ſolicitude to have her own ſentiments confirmed and ſanctioned by your concurrence, her diſtruſt of her own views of characters and proceedings when contrary to your opinion, is univerſally impaired. Study then during the childhood of your daughter, ſtudy even with greater anxiety as her youth advances, to train her in the habit of regarding you not as a parent only, but as a friend. Fear not, when ſhe enters into the temptations of the world, to point out with unreſtrained ſincerity the dangers in which novelty, and youthful paſſions, and faſhionable example, involve her. If you point them not out fully and aſſiduouſly, you abandon the duty of a parent. But to preſerve the confidence of a friend, point them out with affectionate benignity, mindful of the hazards to which you were yourſelf expoſed under ſimilar circumſtances, at a ſimilar period of youth. It

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is thus that you may hope effectually to guard your daughter from modiſh folly and diſſipation, from indiſcreet intimacies and dangerous connections. It is thus that you may engage her to avail herſelf of the advantage of your experience; and render to her, by your counſel, the moſt ſignal benefits both in the general intercourſe of ſociety, and particularly when ſhe meditates on any proſpect which may be opened to her of ſettling in connubial life.

There is a medium which is not always eaſy to be obſerved, with reſpect to daughters being allowed to accept invitations to paſs ſome time in other families. Such intercourſe on proper occaſions is improving as well as pleaſant. But if a young woman is accuſtomed to be frequently abſent from home, roving from houſe to houſe, and accumulating viſit upon viſit; ſhe is in no ſmall danger of acquiring an unſettled and diſſipated ſpirit; of becoming diſſatisfied with the calm occupations and enjoyments

of the family fireſide; and even of loſing ſome portion of the warm affection which ſhe felt for her parents and near relations, while ſhe was in the habit of placing her chief delight in their ſociety. If the parent would guard her daughters from all propenſity to this extreme, let her aid the ſobriety of diſpoſition and ſedateneſs of character, already inſtilled into them, by the charms of never-failing and affectionate good humour on her own part, which are eſſential to the comfort of domeſtic life, and particularly attractive in the eye of youth. There are faſhionable mothers who, at the ſame time that they introduce their daughters into a general and free acquaintance with others of their age, ſex, and ſtation, carefully inſtil into them the prudential maxim, to contract friendſhip with none. The ſcheme either fails to ſucceed, or breeds up a character of determined ſelfiſhneſs. Let the parent encourage her daughters in friendly attachment to young women, in whom amiable manners and virtuous principles are exemplified. With the ſociety

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of ſuch friends let her willingly gratify them; ſometimes abroad, more frequently under her own roof. But let her not conſent to their reſidence in families where they will be converſant with enſnaring company of either ſex; where boldneſs of demeanour will be communicated by example, an extravagant fondneſs for amuſements inſpired, habits of ſerious reflection diſcouraged, and the rational employment of time diſregarded. Let her not be flattered by the ſolicitations, imprudent, however well intended, of ladies of ſuperior rank, deſirous to introduce her daughters into circles in which, according to their preſent place in the ſcale of ſociety, they are not deſtined to move. If ambition be once kindled by introduction into a higher ſphere, is it likely that it will deſcend contentedly from its elevation? Is it likely that the modeſt retirement of private life will remain as engaging as before?

It is a common remark, that ſiſters generally love their brothers more warmly than

each other. If the fact be admitted, it muſt be acknowledged, I apprehend, to have been rightly aſcribed to competition. Brothers can ſcarcely ever be engaged in the purſuit of an object, which can excite rivalſhip on the part of a ſiſter. It is indeed ſeldom that they are rivals to each other. When they enter into active life, they are immediately diſtributed into different profeſſions and ſituations. One is a clergyman, another purſues phyſic, a third ſtudies law, a fourth becomes a merchant. One reſides in a country village, another in a provincial town, another in the capital, another in a ſea-port. They may forward each other; but they cannot claſh. They move on in parallel lines; ſome with greater, ſome with leſs celerity, but never croſs each other's courſe. Whereas ſiſters, both while they continue in the paternal manſion, and afterwards when ſettled in marriage, are frequently drawn into competitions by the ſhewy trifles and follies on which the female mind is too apt to dote. And whenever they begin to

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enter into competitions, mutual affection inſtantly cools. A mother, in confirming her children in reciprocal love, ought uniformly to bear this diſtinction in her mind.

There is ſcarcely any circumſtance by which the ſober judgement and the fixed principles of parents are ſo frequently perverted, as by a ſcheming eagerneſs reſpecting the ſettlement of their daughters in marriage. That a daughter ſhould be ſettled in marriage is a point on which parents, who would not take an improper ſtep to promote it, are ſeen too earneſtly to fix their hearts. They do not ſufficiently reflect that the great object, which both old and young ought to have in view through life, is, to do their duty, as in the ſight of God, in the ſituation in which they are actually placed, without being too ſolicitous to change it. In proportion as the mind of a young woman is likely to lean with too ſtrong a bias towards matrimony, the more carefully

fully ought a parent to guard againſt aiding the deluſion. Yet not only is this truth very frequently diſregarded, but abſurd and unjuſtifiable activity is employed to effect matrimonial eſtabliſhments. A mother, who has perſonally experienced how ſlight the connection is between connubial happineſs and the worldly advantages of wealth and grandeur, is often ſeen training her children in the very paths which ſhe has found rugged and ſtrewed with thorns. The opinions, the paſſions, which, having ſmothered, ſhe imagined that ſhe had extinguiſhed, ſhew themſelves to be alive. She takes pains to deceive herſelf, to deviſe apologies to her own conſcience for indulging in the caſe of her children the ſpirit of vanity and the anxiety for preeminence, which on every other occaſion ſhe has long and loudly condemned. She magnifies in fancy the power of doing good, the command of worldly enjoyments, all the advantages, comforts, and gratifications, which rank and opulence

confer; diminiſhes in the ſame proportion the temptations and the drawbacks with which they are accompanied; and diſcovers reaſons which would render them peculiarly trifling in the preſent inſtance. Has ſhe herſelf been unhappy, notwithſtanding the poſſeſſion of riches and honours? She aſcribes her misfortune to accidental cauſes, from the effect of moſt, if not all, of which ſhe conceives that her daughter may eaſily be ſecured. Her huſband's temper unexpectedly proved indifferent: ſhe herſelf had unforeſeen bad health, and partly through want of care: the neighbourhood unluckily was more unfriendly and diſreſpectful than could have been apprehended: opportunities of doing good happened to be uncommonly rare, and generally occurred at times when it chanced not to be thoroughly convenient to embrace them: and various other ſingular and unaccountable circumſtances, the exiſtence of which ſhe perfectly remembers, though ſhe does not at preſent recollect the particulars, all conſpired to prevent her from

from enjoying the happineſs naturally belonging to her ſituation. Her daughter, however, may be more provident, and aſſuredly will be more fortunate. Satisfied with this explanation, ſhe ſtudies the means of throwing her daughter into the way of young men of ſtation more or leſs ſuperior to her own. And while ſhe continues to perſuade herſelf, that religious principles and a worthy character are the grand objects to which ſhe attends in the future huſband of her child; ſhe is prepared to admit with reſpect to each of thoſe particulars a conſiderable deduction from the ſtandard which ſhe profeſſes to have fixed, when compenſated by a title, or the addition of a thouſand pounds in the rent-roll. Public places now preſent themſelves to her mind as the ſcenes where her wiſhes may have the faireſt proſpect of being realiſed. She enlarges to her huſband on the propriety of doing juſtice to their daughter's attractions, and giving her the ſame chance which other ladies of her age enjoy of making a reſpectable conqueſt;

conqueſt; dwells on the wonderful effect of ſudden impreſſions; recounts various examples in which wealthy baronets and the eldeſt ſons of peers have been captivated by the reſiſtleſs power of female elegance in a ball-room, and forgets or paſſes over the wretchedneſs by which the marriage was in moſt inſtances ſucceeded; and drags him, unconvinced, from London to Bath, from Tunbridge to Weymouth, that the young woman may be corrupted into diſſipation, folly, and miſconduct, and expoſed, as in a public market, to the inſpection of bachelors of faſhion. It would ſcarcely be practicable to invent a ſyſtem more indelicate to the feelings of the perſon for whoſe benefit it is profeſſedly carried on; nor one whoſe effect, conſidered in a matrimonial point of view, would have a greater tendency to betray her into a haſty engagement, and the unhappineſs which a haſty engagement frequently forebodes. But in this plan, as in others, cunning not ſeldom overreaches itſelf. The jealouſy of other mothers ſuſpects the ſcheme; the

the quickſightedneſs of young men diſcerns it. When once it is diſcerned, its conſequences are wholly oppoſite to thoſe which it was intended to produce. The deſtined captive recoils from the net. The odium of the plot, inſtead of being confined, as juſtice commonly requires, to the mother, is extended to the daughter, and purſues her whitherſoever ſhe goes. In the intercourſe of private families in the country, where ſimilar ſchemes are not unfrequent, though conducted on a ſmaller ſcale; the forward advances and ſtudied attentions of the mother to young men of fortune whom ſhe wiſhes to call her ſons-in-law, are often in the higheſt degree diſtreſſing to her daughters as well as offenſive to the other parties; and in many caſes actually prevent attachments, which would otherwiſe have taken place.

The adjuſtment of pecuniary tranſactions antecedent to marriage commonly belongs to the fathers of the young people, rather than to maternal care. But the

the opinion of the mother will, of courſe, have its weight. Let that weight ever be employed to counteract the operation of ſordid principles; and to promote the arrangement of all ſubordinate points on ſuch a baſis as may promiſe permanence to the reciprocal happineſs of the two families, which are about to be connected.

When matrimonial alliances introduce a mother to new ſons and new daughters; let her ſtudy to conduct herſelf towards them in a manner befitting the ties of affinity, by which ſhe is now united to them. If ſhe harbour prejudices againſt them, if pride, jealouſy, caprice, or any other unwarrantable emotion mark her behaviour towards them; the injuſtice of her conduct to the individuals themſelves has this further acceſſion of criminality, that it alſo wounds in the tendereſt point the feelings of her own children.

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The peculiar obligations of parent and child are not wholly cancelled but by the ſtroke which ſeparates the bands of mortality. When years have put a period to authority and ſubmiſſion; parental ſolicitude, filial reverence, and mutual affection ſurvive. Let the mother exert herſelf during her life to draw cloſer and cloſer the links of benevolence and kindneſs. Let her counſel, never obtruſively offered or preſſed, be at all times ready when it will be beneficial and acceptable. But let her not be diſſatisfied, though the proceedings which ſhe recommends ſhould not appear the moſt adviſable to her children, who are now free agents. Let her ſhare in their joy, and ſympathiſe with their afflictions; "rejoice with them that re-"joice, and weep with them that "weep (*p*)." She may then juſtly hope that their love will never forget what ſhe has done and what ſhe has ſuffered for them; and that the hand of filial gratitude will delight to ſmooth the path of her latter days.

(*p*) Romans, xii. 15.

CHAP. XV.

FURTHER REMARKS ON THE DUTIES BELONGING TO THE MIDDLE PERIOD OF LIFE.

AMONG the duties appertaining to the female ſex in the middle period of life, thoſe which are peculiar to the wife and to the mother hold the principal rank, and form the larger proportion. They have already been diſcuſſed at ſufficient length. It may not, however, be unprofitable to ſubjoin ſome farther remarks, partly referring to the conduct of married women during that period, and partly to the ſituation of individuals, who have remained ſingle.

So engaging are the attractions, ſo impreſſive is the force of beauty, that women, diſtinguiſhed by perſonal charms,

are not permitted long to continue unconſcious of being the objects of general attention. Admired and flattered, purſued with aſſiduities, ſingled out from their aſſociates at every ſcene of publick reſort, they perceive themſelves univerſally treated with marked and peculiar preference. To thoſe in whom harmony of form and brilliancy of complexion are not conſpicuous, youth itſelf, graced with unaffected ſimplicity, or at leaſt rendered intereſting by ſprightlineſs and animation, is capable of enſuring no inconſiderable portion of regard. As youth and beauty wear away, the homage which had been paid to them is gradually withdrawn. They who had heretofore been treated as the idols of public and private circles, and had forgotten to anticipate the termination of their empire, are at length awakened from their dream, and conſtrained to reſt ſatisfied with the common notice ſhewn to their ſtation, and the reſpect which they may have acquired by their virtues. To deſcend from eminence

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is painful; and to many minds not the leſs painful, when the eminence itſelf had no real value, and the foundation, on which it reſted, no durable ſolidity. She who is mortified by the loſs or diminution of thoſe ſuperficial obſervances which her perſonal attractions had ſometimes induced admiration to render; and had more frequently drawn from curioſity, or vanity, or politeneſs, while ſhe blindly gave admiration credit for the whole; has not known or has diſregarded the only qualities and endowments, which ſecure genuine eſteem, and confer attractions worthy of being prized. Yet, ſcarcely any ſpectacle is more common in the haunts of polite life, than to behold a woman in the wane of beauty courting with unremitting perſeverance the honours which ſhe can no longer command; exerciſing her ingenuity in laying traps for compliment and encomium; ſhutting her eyes againſt thoſe alterations in her own countenance and figure, which are viſible to every other perſon on the ſlighteſt glance; ſupplying

by numberleſs artifices, and expedients perpetually changing, the odious depradations of time, ſwelling with envious indignation at the ſight of her juniors enjoying in their day the notice once paid to herſelf; unwilling to permit her daughters to accompany her into public, leſt their native bloom ſhould expoſe by contraſt the purchaſed complexion of their mother, or their very ſtature betray that ſhe can no longer be young; and diſgracing herſelf, and diſguſting even thoſe who deem it civility to flatter and deceive her, by affecting the flippancy of manners, for which youth itſelf would have been a moſt inadequate apology.

Among ladies, who have fully arrived at the period of age, of which we now ſpeak, there are to be found many who, in conſequence of having been early taught by a rational and religious education to fix their minds on proper objects, have eſcaped even from their firſt introduction into the world the dazzling influence of thoſe allurements, which

which faſcinate the greater part of their ſex; or have learned from reflection and experience in the progreſs of a changeful life to rate them according to their proper value. Of thoſe, however, to whom the one or the other of theſe deſcriptions is applicable, there are ſome, who in their converſation and intercourſe with young perſons of their own ſex contribute to eſtabliſh others in the errors which they have themſelves been happy enough to avoid. Impelled by the deſire of rendering themſelves agreeable to their youthful aſſociates; a deſire commendable in itſelf, but reprehenſible when in practice it becomes the evident cauſe of indiſcretion; they endeavour to ſuit their diſcourſe to the taſte of their hearers by confining it to the ſubjects of dreſs, perſonal appearance, public amuſements, and other ſimilar topics; and by expatiating upon them in a manner from which their ſentiments reſpecting them might reaſonably be inferred to be very different from what they really are. Not that they are auſterely to turn away from lighter themes

of converſation; or to conſider a total abſtinence from innocent trifling as one of the eſſential characteriſtics of wiſdom and of virtue. But it is one thing to be auſtere, and another to be prudent and diſcriminating. There is an extreme on the ſide of compliance and accommodation. And good humour is carried to exceſs, when it excites miſconceptions; rivets miſtakes; ſanctions enſnaring cuſtoms; and prohibits experience from intermixing, amidſt the effuſions of cheerfulneſs and benevolence, the voice of ſeaſonable inſtruction.

The firſt obligation incumbent on every individual is habitually to act aright in the ſphere of perſonal duty: the next, to encourage, and, in proportion to exiſting ability and opportunity, to inſtruct others to do the ſame. St. Paul, in his directions to Titus (*q*), reſpecting the admonitions to be delivered by the latter to elderly women, attends to this diſtinction. "Speak thou

(*q*) Titus, ii. 1, 5.

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" the things which become ſound doctrine—
" that the aged women likewiſe be in be-
" haviour as becometh holineſs, not falſe
" accuſers;" not guilty of calumny and ſlander. Having ſubjoined to theſe injunctions reſpecting their perſonal conduct another which, it may be hoped, is in the preſent times leſs frequently applicable in our own country than it ſeems to have been in Crete (*r*) in the days of the Apoſtle, " that they be not given
" to much wine;" he extends his view to the duties which they owe to the younger part of their own ſex. He directs that they be " teachers of good things; that they
" may teach the young women to be ſober," (full of prudence and moderation,) " to love
" their huſbands, to love their children, to
" be diſcreet, chaſte, keepers at home,
" good," (of kind tempers,) " obedient to
" their own huſbands; that the word of
" God be not blaſphemed." The obligation of imparting inſtruction to young

(*r*) Where Titus was reſident when St. Paul addreſſed this Epiſtle to him.—See Chap. i. 5—12, 13.

women preſſes on thoſe who are further advanced in life with the greater force and urgency in proportion to the cloſeneſs of the ties, whether of conſanguinity or of friendſhip, by which the latter are connected with the former; and alſo to the circumſtances of diſpoſition, of time and place, and various other particulars, which may give to the admonition a more or leſs favourable proſpect of ſucceſs. Let it not however be imagined that it binds you to conſult the improvement of your daughter only and your niece, or of ſome individual thrown by peculiar events under your immediate ſuperintendence. It binds you to conſult the improvement of all whom it is in your power to improve, whether connected with you more or leſs; whether your ſuperiors, your equals, or your inferiors; whether likely to derive a higher or a lower degree of advantage from your endeavours. It binds you to conſult their improvement by deliberate advice, by incidental reflection, by ſilent example; ſtudiouſly ſelecting, varying, and combining

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the means which you employ according to the character and ſituation of the perſon whom you deſire to benefit. It binds you to do all with earneſtneſs and prudence; with ſincerity and benevolence. It binds you to beware, leſt by negligence you loſe opportunities which you might with propriety have embraced; or through inadvertence and miſtaken politeneſs contribute to ſtrengthen ſentiments and practices, to which, if you are at the time unable to oppoſe them with effect, you ought, at leaſt, not to have given the apparent ſanction of your authority.

The good ſenſe and the refinement of the preſent age have abated much of the contempt, with which it was heretofore the practice to regard women, who had attained or paſt the middle period of life without having entered into the bands of marriage. The contempt was unjuſt, and it was ungenerous. Why was it ever deemed to be merited? Becauſe the objects of it were remaining in a ſtate of ſingle-

ſinglehood? Perhaps that very circumſtance might be entitled in a large majority of inſtances to praiſe and admiration. So various are the motives which men in general permit to have conſiderable influence on their views in marriage; ſo different are the opinions of different individuals of that ſex as to perſonal appearance and manners in the other; that of the women who paſs through life without entering into a connubial engagement, there are, probably, very few who have not had, earlier or later, the option of contracting it. If then, from a wiſe and delicate reluctance to accept offers made by perſons of objectionable or of ambiguous character; from unwillingneſs to leave the abode of a deſolate parent, ſtruggling with difficulties, or declining towards the grave; from a repugnance to marriage produced by affection ſurviving the loſs of a beloved object prematurely ſnatched away by death; if in conſequence of any of theſe or of ſimilar cauſes a woman continue ſingle, is ſhe to be deſpiſed? Let it be admitted that there are

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ſome individuals, who, by manifeſt ill-temper, or by other repulſive parts of their character, have even from their youth precluded themſelves from the chance of receiving matrimonial propoſals. Is this a reaſon for branding unmarried women of a middle age with a general ſtigma? Be it admitted that certain peculiarities of deportment, certain faults of diſpoſition, which, though they ought ſtudiouſly to be ſhunned and corrected, it is not neceſſary here to recite, are proverbially frequent in women, who have long remained ſingle. Let it then alſo be remembered that every ſituation of life has a tendency to encourage ſome particular errors and failings; that the defects of women, who, by choice or by neceſſity, are in a ſituation extremely different from that in which the generality of their ſex is placed, will always attract more than their proportional ſhare of attention; and that whenever attention is directed towards them, it is no more than common juſtice at the ſame time to render ſignal praiſe to the individuals,

who are free from the faults in manners and temper, which many under ſimilar circumſtances have contracted. Let it alſo be obſerved, that in the ſituation of the perſons in queſtion there are peculiarities, the recollection of which will produce in a generous mind impreſſions very different from ſcorn. They are perſons cut off from a ſtate of life uſually regarded as the moſt deſirable. They are frequently unprovided with friends, on whoſe advice or aſſiſtance they can thoroughly confide. Sometimes they are deſtitute of a ſettled home; and compelled by a ſcanty income to depend on the protection, and bear the humours, of ſupercilious relations. Sometimes in obſcure retreats, ſolitary, and among ſtrangers, they wear away the hours of ſickneſs and of age, unfurniſhed with the means of procuring the aſſiſtance and the comforts which ſinking health demands. Let not unfeeling deriſion be added to the difficulties, which it has perhaps been impoſſible to avoid, or virtue not to decline.

CHAP. XVI.

ON THE DUTIES OF THE DECLINE OF LIFE.—CONCLUSION.

THE courſe of our enquiry now conducts us to the period, when gray hairs and augmenting infirmities forbode with louder and louder admonition the common termination of mortality. The ſpring and ſummer of life are paſt; autumn is far advanced; the frown of winter is already felt. Age has its privileges and its honours. It claims exemption from the more arduous offices of ſociety, to which its ſtrength is no longer equal; and immunity from ſome at leaſt of the exertions, the fruit of which it cannot enjoy. Deprived of many active pleaſures, it claims an equivalent of eaſe and repoſe. Forced to contract the ſphere of its utility, it claims a grateful remembrance of former ſervices. From the child and the near relation, it claims duty and love:

love: from all, tenderneſs and reſpect. Its claims are juſt, acceptable, and ſacred. Reaſon approves them; ſympathy welcomes them; Revelation ſanctions them. "Let children requite their parents (*s*)." "Deſpiſe not thy mother when ſhe is "old (*t*)." "Intreat the elder women as "mothers (*u*)." "Ye younger, ſubmit "yourſelves unto the elder (*x*)." "Thou "ſhalt riſe up before the hoary head (*y*)." But if age would be regarded with affection and reverence; it muſt ſhew itſelf inveſted with the qualities by which thoſe feelings are to be conciliated. It muſt be uſeful according to its ability, by example, if not by exertion. If unable to continue the full exerciſe of active virtues, it muſt diſplay the excellence of thoſe which are paſſive. It muſt reſiſt the temptations by which it is beſet, and guard itſelf againſt indulging faults on the plea of infirmity. In a word, if the "hoary head" is to be

(*s*) 1 Tim. v. 4.
(*t*) Prov. xxiii. 22.
(*u*) 1 Tim. v. 1, 2.
(*x*) 1 Peter, v. 5.
(*y*) Levit. 19. 32.

"a crown

"a crown of glory," it muſt be "found "in the way of righteouſneſs (z)."

Of all the methods by which a woman arrived at old age may preclude herſelf from enjoying the reſpect to which by her years alone ſhe would have been entitled, an attachment to the gay amuſements of youth is perhaps the leaſt uncertain. To behold one whoſe countenance, whoſe figure, whoſe every geſture proclaims that the laſt ſands of life are running out, clinging to the levities of a world which ſhe is about to leave for ever; haunting with tottering ſteps the ſcene of public entertainment; and labouring with ſickly efforts, to win attention by the affectation of juvenile ſprightlineſs and eaſe; to behold gray hairs thus ſpontaneouſly degraded and debaſed, is not only one of the moſt diſguſting, but one of the moſt melancholy ſpectacles which can be ſurveyed.

Avarice is one of the vices of age, which is more frequently exemplified among men

(z) Prov. xvi. 31.

than

than in the female ſex. The cauſes of the difference may eaſily be explained. The attention of men in general is more or leſs directed by the circumſtances of their condition to the accumulation of money. In the caſe of thoſe who purſue lucrative profeſſions, commerce, or any other employment of which gain is the object, the fact is manifeſt. It is ſcarcely leſs apparent in the caſe of noblemen and private gentlemen, who live upon the incomes of their eſtates. A reaſonable deſire of providing fortunes for their younger children, without leaving an immoderate burthen on the patrimonial inheritance, commonly diſpoſes them to ſtudy at leaſt, if not to accompliſh, plans of annual ſaving. From theſe cares and occupations women, whether married or unmarried, are comparatively free. In the next place, their native ſtock of benevolence and liberality is often leſs impaired than that of the other ſex, accuſtomed in the active buſineſs of life to the continual ſight and knowledge of fraud, ſelfiſhneſs, and demerit. Hence, when advancing years bring in

in their train timidity, ſuſpicion, an high opinion of the power of wealth to command reſpect, or any other feeling or perſuaſion which is adapted to excite or to confirm a propenſity to avarice; that propenſity finds in the antecedent purſuits and habits and ſentiments of men encouragements and ſupports which among individuals of the female ſex it experiences in a leſs degree or not at all. Among the aged, however, of the female ſex, there are examples of covetouſneſs ſufficient to authoriſe a deliberate admonition againſt it.

A deficiency in tender concern for the intereſts of others is occaſionally perceptible in the aged. Of the ties which united them to the world, many are broken. The honours, the purſuits, the profits, even the temporary happineſs and misfortunes of individuals may well appear to them in the light in which they ought to be ſeen by every individual of the human race, as trifles when contraſted with eternity. The ſenſations too become blunted; and the

inertneſs of the body weighs down the activity of the mind. Hence the livelineſs and warmth of benevolence are ſometimes impaired. To preſerve them undiminiſhed in the midſt of infirmity and pain, and while perſonal connection with mortal events is daily becoming looſer and looſer, is one of the nobleſt and moſt endearing exertions of old age.

Affectionate tendencies, however, in the boſoms of the old proceed, in ſome inſtances, to an extreme; and require, though not to be checked, yet to be regulated. Fondneſs attaches itſelf with pernicious eagerneſs to one of the children of the family; reſts not without the preſence of the favourite object; deſtroys its health by pampering it with dainties; and ſtimulates and ſtrengthens its paſſions by immoderate and indiſcriminate gratification. Many a child, whom parental diſcipline would have trained in the paths of knowledge and virtue, has been nurſed up in ignorance and prepared for vice by the blind indulgence

of

of the grandmother and the aunt. Unwillingneſs to thwart the wiſhes of old age, curtailed of many enjoyments and impatient of contradiction, frequently reſtrains the parent from timely and effectual interference. Were this obvious circumſtance conſidered beforehand, and with due ſeriouſneſs, by women advanced in years, they would leſs frequently reduce thoſe with whom they live to the embarraſſing dilemma of performing a very irkſome duty, or of acquieſcing in the danger and detriment, perhaps in the ruin, of their offſpring.

Among the defects of old age querulouſneſs is eſteemed one of the moſt prominent. Complaint is the natural voice of ſuffering; and to ſuffer is the common lot of declining years. Even in the earlier periods of life, women of weak health and irritable ſpirits not ſeldom contract a habit of complaining; and though when called to ſevere trials, they may diſcloſe exemplary patience, yet they indulge in common life a frequent

recurrence of the tones and language of querulouſneſs. The inward trouble ſeems ever on the watch for opportunities of revealing itſelf; and any little mark of regard, any expreſſion of tenderneſs, from a huſband or a brother, immediately calls forth the intimation of an ailment. In age, when the affection of children and near relations is rightly diſtinguiſhed by particular aſſiduity and ſolicitude; when, if the hand of Providence withhold acuteneſs of pain, ſome degree of infirmity and ſuffering is mercifully allowed to give almoſt conſtant admonitions of an event which cannot be remote; when garrulity, no longer employed on the variety of ſubjects which once intereſted the mind, dwells with augmented eagerneſs on preſent objects and preſent ſenſations; it is not ſurpriſing that a diſpoſition to complaint ſhould gather ſtrength. But let all who ſuffer remember, that it is not by continual lamentation that the largeſt meaſure of compaſſion is to be obtained. Reiterated impreſſions loſe their force. The ear becomes

comes dull to ſounds to which it is habituated. A part of the uneaſineſſes deſcribed by the ſufferer is attributed to imagination; and the mind of the hearer, inſtead of eſtimating the amount of the remainder, wonders and regrets that they are not borne better. Among the ſtrongeſt ſupports of pity is the involuntary reverence commanded by ſilent reſignation.

Another of the unfavourable characteriſtics by which age is ſometimes diſtinguiſhed, is a peeviſh and diſſatisfied temper. To thoſe who are converſant with a narrow circle of objects, trifles ſwell into importance. Small diſappointments are permitted to aſſume the form of ſerious evils; inadvertence and unintentional omiſſions are conſtrued into poſitive unkindneſs. Novelties of every ſort diſguſt; and every little variation is a novelty. All things appear to have changed, and to have changed for the worſe. Manners are no longer ſimple, as they were once: faſhions are not rational and elegant, as heretofore:

youth is become noiſy, petulant, and irreverent to its ſeniors: rank and ſtation are no longer treated with reſpect. Moral virtue has diminiſhed: tradeſmen have loſt their honeſty, ſervants their ready and punctual obedience. Even in perſonal appearance the riſing generation is far inferior to the laſt. The very courſe, and aſpect, and energy of nature ſympathiſe in the general transformation. The ſeaſons are no longer regular and genial: the verdure of the fields is impaired: flowers have loſt their odours, fruits their reliſh. Such are the ſuſpicions prone to irritate the boſoms of the old; ſuch the repinings which too often dwell upon their lips. To tolerate, to pity this waywardneſs is the office of the young; to guard againſt indulging it is the duty of the aged. Let the former anticipate the hour in which they too, ſhould they ſurvive, will be tempted blindly to attribute to every ſurrounding object the decay which has taken place in their own faculties alone. Let the latter recall to mind the ſenſations with which

which they themſelves, in the prime of life, witneſſed ſimilar miſconceptions, and liſtened to ſimilar complaints.

If age have its peculiar burthens, it has alſo, when crowned with piety, its peculiar conſolations. The fervid paſſions which agitated the breaſt of youth have ſubſided: the vanities which dazzled its gaze have ceaſed to delude. Cheerful hours, enlivened by the ſociety of deſcendents, of relations, perhaps of ſome coeval friend endeared by the recollection of long eſtabliſhed regard, ſtill remain. If maladies preſs heavily on the functions of life, if pain embitter the remnant of your ſatisfactions; yet the duration of your ſufferings cannot be long. If the day be far ſpent, the hour of reſt muſt neceſſarily be at hand. The young, when overtaken with calamities correſponding to thoſe which you endure, know not but that, according to the ſettled order of human events, a very long period of ſorrow and anguiſh may await them. From all ſuch diſtreſſes you will ſhortly be

at peace. Whether your waning years be loaded with affliction, or glide away placid and ſerene; have you not ſtill in your poſſeſſion the chief of earthly bleſſings, the promiſes of the Goſpel, the proſpect of immortality? If thoſe promiſes, that proſpect, be not adapted to give you comfort, lay not your diſquiet to the charge of age; charge it on your paſt life, on your own folly, on your own ſin: and labour ere the day of grace be paſt, ere the portentous ſhades of death and miſery cloſe around you, to make even yet your peace with God through the mediation of an atoning Saviour. But if you have ſo lived as to have an intereſt in the glorious hopes of Chriſtianity; how peculiarly ſtrong muſt be your delight in looking forward to rewards, from which you are ſeparated by ſo brief an interval!

Endear then yourſelf to all around you by cheerful good-humour, by benevolence, by affectionate kindneſs, by devout patience and reſignation. By ſeaſonable ex-

hortation, by uniform example, endear to them that piety which is your ſupport. Engage them to a continual remembrance of the hour, when they ſhall be as you are. So ſhall your memory ſpeak the language of inſtruction and of comfort, when you are ſilent in the grave.

In youth and in age, in ſingle and in matrimonial life, in all circumſtances and under all relations, to live ſtedfaſtly and habitually under the guidance of thoſe principles which they who are now lying on the bed of death are rejoicing that they have obeyed, or mourning that they have diſregarded, is the ſum of human wiſdom and human happineſs. "The Lord is not willing that any "ſhould periſh, but that all ſhould come "to repentance (*a*)." "God loved us, and "ſent his Son to be the propitiation for "our ſins (*b*)"—"whom God hath ſet forth "to be a propitiation through faith in his "blood (*c*)." "If ye, being evil, know

(*a*) 2 Peter, iii. 9. (*b*) 1 John, iv. 10.
(*c*) Rom. iii. 25.

"how

"how to give good gifts unto your "children; how much more ſhall your "heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit "to them that aſk Him (*d*)?" "The "fear of the Lord, that is wiſdom, and "to depart from evil is underſtanding (*e*)." "He that will love life and ſee good days, "let him refrain his tongue from evil, "and his lips that they ſpeak no guile. "Let him eſchew evil, and do good: "let him ſeek peace and enſue it. For "the eyes of the Lord are over the right-"eous, and his ears are open to their "prayers: but the face of the Lord is "againſt them that do evil (*f*)." "The "righteous ſhall be recompenſed in the "earth—the righteous hath hope in his "death (*g*)." "If thou wilt enter into "life, keep the commandments (*h*)." "Be-"lieve in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and "thou ſhalt be ſaved (*i*)." You may

(*d*) Luke, ii. 13. (*e*) Job, xxviii. 28.
(*f*) 1 Peter, iii. 10—12. (*g*) Prov. xi. 31.—xiv. 32.
(*h*) Matt. xix. 17. (*i*) Acts, xvi. 31.

diſbelieve

diſbelieve Chriſtianity: but its truth is not on that account impaired. You may ſlight the impending day of retribution: but its approach is not on that account retarded. "The Lord hath purpoſed; "and who ſhall diſannul it?" "I am "God, declaring the end from the be- "ginning, and from ancient times the "things that are not yet done; ſaying, "My Counſel ſhall ſtand (*k*)." What if Chriſtianity had commanded you wholly to refrain even from reaſonable pleaſures and moderate indulgences? Would you have murmured at temporary forbearance when compared with an eternal reward? Chriſtianity however impoſes no ſuch reſtriction. Even in this reſpect its "yoke is eaſy," and its "burthen is "light;" eaſy and light to all who are diſpoſed to fulfil what they perceive to be their duty. It prohibits you from no pleaſures except thoſe which, had Chriſtianity never been revealed, your own rea-

(*k*) Iſaiah, xiv. 27.—xlvi. 9, 10.

ſon,

ſon, if unbiaſſed, would have condemned. It reſtrains you from no innocent gratifications, except when they would be unſeaſonable or exceſſive; when, by preventing you from diſcharging ſome preſent duty, or rendering you leſs qualified for the diſcharge of duty at a future period, they would diminiſh your everlaſting recompenſe. Be it however remembered, that they who, in deciding whether they ſhould or ſhould not adopt a life of religion, bring into the argument any calculations as to the amount of preſent pleaſures to be ſacrificed, are as little acquainted with the dictates of ſober reaſon, as with the ſpirit of chriſtian repentance and] converſion. If your days be crowned with worldly bleſſings, if you have competence and health, if you be happy in your parents, your connections, your children; what ſolid delight could you feel in the contemplation of your felicity, did you know no more than that every object whence it is derived is together with yourſelf deſcending

with

with ceaſeleſs rapidity to the abyſs of death? How would you have borne to ſtand on the brink of the gulph, gazing acroſs in vain for an oppoſite ſhore, and looking down into unfathomable vacuity; if Religion had not unfolded to you the ſecrets of another world, and inſtructed you how to attain its never-ending glories? But your comforts perhaps are undermined by ſickneſs or misfortune, and your proſpects darkened by grief. Religion can blunt the arrows of pain, and brighten the gloom of calamity and ſorrow. It teaches you the moral and ſanctifying purpoſes for which affliction and chaſtiſement are mercifully ſent. It teaches you that "by the ſadneſs of the "countenance, the heart is made better (*l*)." Are your parents unnatural; or are they no more? It tells you that you have an Almighty and all-bounteous father in Heaven. Is your huſband unkind? It teaches you to win him by your modeſt virtues; and gives you a ſolemn aſſurance that patience ſhall not loſe its reward. Are you deprived by

(*l*) Eccl. vii. 3.

death

death of a beloved partner in marriage? It repreſents to you the Ruler of the Univerſe as the eſpecial protector of the widow and the orphan. Are your offspring taken from you in their early childhood? It tells you that "of ſuch is the kingdom of God (*m*)." Are they ſnatched away in riper years? It reminds you that they are removed from trials which they might not have withſtood. Were their talents more than uſually promiſing? It tells you that thoſe talents might have proved the ſources of ruinous temptations. Whether you have loſt parent, huſband, or child, it tells you that "them "which ſleep in Jeſus will God bring with "him (*n*)." It tells you that the means of ſecuring to yourſelf a participation of the unchangeable happineſs, deſtined for thoſe who have been faithful ſervants of Chriſt, are offered to you by the grace of God, are placed within you reach, are preſſed upon your notice and acceptance. Religion at times ſpeaks to you the language of terror. It ſets before you threatenings as

(*m*) Mark, x. 14. (*n*) 1 Theſ. iv, 14.

con-

conſpicuouſly as promiſes. It inſiſts not more ſtrongly on the comforts and rewards aſſigned to holineſs here and hereafter, than on the certain miſery attendant on unrighteouſneſs. It dwells not more emphatically on the wiſdom and ſecurity of thoſe, who cleave unto God with full purpoſe of heart, than on the ſelf-deluſion and extreme danger of thoſe, from the obſtinately trifling to the obdurate ſinner, who in different degrees fall ſhort of that ſcriptural ſtandard; and do not ſo love their Maker "with all their hearts, and "with all their minds, and with all their "ſouls, and with all their ſtrength," as to ſuffer no pleaſure, no intereſt, no worldly object whatever, to hold the place in their thoughts and affections, which is due to the love and the ſervice of God. It tells of "indignation and wrath, tribulation "and anguiſh, upon every ſoul of man "that doeth evil;" of "the place of "darkneſs and torment, where the worm "dieth not, and the fire is never quench-"ed;" as plainly as of the inheritance of the

the Saints in light, " an inheritance incor-
" ruptible and undefiled, a crown of glory
" that fadeth not away, fullneſs of joy
" in the preſence of God for evermore."
Yet in its moſt awful denunciations it evinces a deſire to ſhew mercy. It ſpeaks the language of terror to lead you to repentance. It denounces judgements that, under the guidance and bleſſing of God, you may eſcape them. But, remember, that it ſpeaks no terrors, it denounces no judgements, which ſhall not be executed on all who perſevere in diſobedience. If you be not among thoſe who hear the final ſentence, " Come, ye bleſſed of my
" Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for
" you from the foundation of the world;"
you will be of the number of them to whom it is ſaid, " depart, ye curſed, into
" everlaſting fire, prepared for the Devil
" and his Angels (*o*)."

(*o*) Matthew, xxv. 34. 41.

THE END.

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